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THE POETICAL WORKS

OF

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

VOL. V

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William Wordsworth

after Margaret Gillies

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THE POETICAL WORKS

OF

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

EDITED BY

WILLIAM KNIGHT

VOL. V

LONDON
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London

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1896

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WORDSWORTH'S POETICAL WORKS

THE EXCURSION

Composed 1795-1814.—Published 1814

[SOMETHING must now be said of this poem, but chiefly, as has been done through the whole of these notes, with reference to my personal friends, and especially to her who has perseveringly taken them down from my dictation. Towards the close of the first book, stand the lines that were first written,—beginning "Nine tedious years," and ending "Last human tenant of these ruined walls." These were composed in 1795, at Racedown; and for several passages describing the employment and demeanour of Margaret during her affliction, I was indebted to observations made in Dorsetshire, and afterwards at Alfoxden, in Somersetshire, where I resided in 1797 and 1798. The lines towards the conclusion of the fourth book, "Despondency corrected,"—beginning "For the man who in this spirit," to the words "intellectual soul,"—were in order of time composed the next, either at Racedown or Alfoxden, I do not remember which. The rest of the poem was written in the vale of Grasmere, chiefly during our residence at Allan Bank. The long poem on my own education was, together with many minor poems, composed while we lived at the cottage at Town-end. Perhaps my purpose of giving an additional interest to these my poems, in the eyes of my nearest and dearest friends, may be promoted by saying a few words upon the character of the Wanderer, the Solitary, and the Pastor, and some other of the persons introduced. And first of the principal one, the Wanderer.

My lamented friend Southey (for this is written a month after his decease*) used to say that had he been born a Papist, the course of life which would in all probability have been his, was the one for which he was most fitted and most to his mind, that of a Benedictine monk, in a convent, furnished, as many once were, and some still are, with an inexhaustible library. *Books*, as appears from many passages in his writings, and was evident to those who had opportunities of observing his daily life, were in fact *his passion;* and *wandering*, I can with truth affirm, was *mine;* but this propensity in me was happily counteracted by inability from want of fortune to fulfil my wishes.

But had I been born in a class which would have deprived me of what is called a liberal education, it is not unlikely that, being strong in body, I should have taken to a way of life such as that in which my Pedlar passed the greater part of his days. At all events, I am here called upon freely to acknowledge that the character I have represented in his person is chiefly an idea of what I fancied my own character might have become in his circumstances. Nevertheless much of what he says and does had an external existence, that fell under my own youthful and subsequent observation.

An individual, named Patrick, by birth and education a Scotchman, followed this humble occupation for many years, and afterwards settled in the town of Kendal.† He married a kinswoman of my wife's, and her sister Sarah was brought up from her ninth year under this good man's roof.‡ My own imaginations I was happy to find clothed in reality, and fresh ones suggested, by what she reported of this man's tenderness of heart, his strong and pure imagination, and his solid attainments in literature, chiefly religious, whether in prose or verse. At Hawkshead also, while I was a schoolboy, there occasionally resided a Packman (the name then generally given to persons of this calling), with whom I had frequent conversations upon what had befallen him, and what he had observed, during his wandering life; and, as was natural, we took much to each other; and, upon the subject of *Pedlarism* in general, as *then* followed, and its favourableness to an intimate knowledge of human concerns, not merely among the humbler classes of

* Southey died on the 21st of March, 1843.—Ed.

† See the Appendix to this volume, Note A, p. 391.—Ed.

‡ "Sarah went to Kendal on our mother's death, but Mr. P. died in the course of a year or two.—M. W." Pencilled on the opposite page of the MS. —Ed.

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society, I need say nothing here in addition to what is to be found in *The Excursion*, and a note attached to it.

Now for the Solitary. Of him I have much less to say. Not long after we took up our abode at Grasmere, came to reside there, from what motive I either never knew or have forgotten, a Scotchman, a little past the middle of life, who had for many years been chaplain to a Highland regiment. He was in no respect, as far as I know, an interesting character, though in his appearance there was a good deal that attracted attention, as if he had been shattered in fortune, and not happy in mind. Of his quondam position I availed myself to connect with the Wanderer, also a Scotchman, a character suitable to my purpose, the elements of which I drew from several persons with whom I had been connected, and who fell under my observation during frequent residences in London at the beginning of the French Revolution. The chief of these was, one may now say, a Mr. Fawcett, a preacher at a Dissenting meeting-house at the Old Jewry. It happened to me several times to be one of his congregation through my connection with Mr. Nicholson of Cateaton Street, Strand, who, at a time when I had not many acquaintances in London, used often to invite me to dine with him on Sundays; and I took that opportunity (Mr. N. being a Dissenter) of going to hear Fawcett, who was an able and eloquent man. He published a poem on War, which had a good deal of merit, and made me think more about him than I should otherwise have done. But his Christianity was probably never very deeply rooted; and, like many others in those times of like shewy talents, he had not strength of character to withstand the effects of the French Revolution, and of the wild and lax opinions which had done so much towards producing it, and far more in carrying it forward in its extremes. Poor Fawcett, I have been told, became pretty much such a person as I have described, and early disappeared from the stage, having fallen into habits of intemperance, which I have heard (though I will not answer for the fact) hastened his death. Of him I need say no more. There were many like him at that time, which the world will never be without, but which were more numerous then, for reasons too obvious to be dwelt upon.

To what is said of the Pastor in the poem, I have little to add but what may be deemed superfluous. It has ever appeared to me highly favourable to the beneficial influence of the Church of England upon all gradations and classes of society, that the

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patronage of its benefices is in numerous instances attached to the estates of noble families of ancient gentry; and accordingly I am gratified by the opportunity afforded me in *The Excursion*, to pourtray the character of a country clergyman of more than ordinary talents, born and bred in the upper ranks of society so as to partake of their refinements, and at the same time brought by his pastoral office and his love of rural life into intimate connection with the peasantry of his native district.

To illustrate the relation which in my mind this Pastor bore to the Wanderer, and the resemblances between them, or rather the points of community in their nature, I likened one to an oak, and the other to a sycamore; and having here referred to this comparison, I need only add, I had no one individual in my mind, wishing rather to embody this idea than to break in upon the simplicity of it by traits of individual character, or of any peculiarity of opinion.

And now for a few words upon the scene where these interviews and conversations are supposed to occur.

The scene of the first book of the poem is, I must own, laid in a tract of country not sufficiently near to that which soon comes into view in the second book, to agree with the fact. All that relates to Margaret, and the ruined cottage, etc., was taken from observations made in the south-west of England, and certainly it would require more than seven-league boots to stretch in one morning, from a common in Somersetshire, or Dorsetshire, to the heights of Furness Fells, and the deep valleys they embosom. For thus dealing with space, I need make, I trust, no apology; but my friends may be amused by the truth.

In the poem, I suppose that the Pedlar and I ascended from a plain country up the vale of Langdale, and struck off a good way above the chapel to the western side of the vale. We ascended the hill, and thence looked down upon the circular recess in which lies Blea Tarn, chosen by the Solitary for his retreat. After we quit his cottage, passing over a low ridge, we descend into another vale, that of Little Langdale, towards the head of which stands embowered, or partly shaded by yews and other trees, something between a cottage and a mansion, or gentleman's house, such as they once were in this country. This I convert into the parsonage, and at the same time, and as by the waving of a magic wand, I turn the comparatively confined vale of Langdale, its tarn, and the rude chapel which once adorned the valley, into the stately and comparatively

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spacious vale of Grasmere and its ancient parish church; and upon the side of Loughrigg Fell, at the foot of the lake, and looking down upon it and the whole Vale and its encompassing mountains, the Pastor is supposed by me to stand, when at sunset he addresses his companions in words which I hope my readers will remember,* or I should not have taken the trouble of giving so much in detail the materials on which my mind actually worked.

Now for a few particulars of *fact*, respecting the persons whose stories are told or characters described by the different speakers. To Margaret I have already alluded. I will add here that the lines beginning,

She was a woman of a steady mind,

and ending

Live on earth a life of happiness,

faithfully delineate, as far as they go, the character possessed in common by many women whom it has been my happiness to know in humble life; and that several of the most touching things which she is represented as saying and doing are taken from actual observation of the distresses and trials under which different persons were suffering, some of them strangers to me, and others daily under my notice.

I was born too late to have a distinct remembrance of the origin of the American war; but the state in which I represent Robert's mind to be, I had frequent opportunities of observing at the commencement of our rupture with France in 1793; opportunities of which I availed myself in the story of the Female Vagrant, as told in the poem on *Guilt and Sorrow*. The account given by the Solitary, towards the close of the second book, in all that belongs to the character of the old man, was taken from a Grasmere pauper, who was boarded in the last house quitting the vale on the road to Ambleside; the character of his hostess, and all that befell the poor man upon the mountain, belongs to Paterdale. The woman I knew well; her name was Ruth Jackson, and she was exactly such a person as I describe. The ruins of the old chapel, among which the old man was found lying, may yet be traced, and stood upon the ridge that divides Paterdale from Boardale and Martindale, having been placed there for the convenience of both districts. The glorious appearance disclosed above and among the mountains, was described partly from what my friend Mr. Luff,

* See *The Excursion*, book ix. l. 614.—Ed.

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who then lived in Paterdale, witnessed upon that melancholy occasion, and partly from what Mary and I had seen, in company with Sir George and Lady Beaumont, above Hartshope Hall, on our way from Paterdale to Ambleside.

And now for a few words upon the Church, its Monuments, and of the Deceased who are spoken of as lying in the surrounding churchyard. But first for the one picture given by the Pastor and the Wanderer of the Living. In this nothing is introduced but what was taken from nature and real life. The cottage was called Hackett, and stands, as described, on the southern extremity of the ridge which separates the two Langdales. The pair who inhabited it were called Jonathan and Betty Yewdale. Once when our children were ill, of whooping-cough, I think, we took them for change of air to this cottage, and were in the habit of going there to drink tea upon fine summer afternoons, so that we became intimately acquainted with the characters, habits, and lives of these good, and let me say, in the main, wise people. The matron had, in her early youth, been a servant in a house at Hawkshead, where several boys boarded, while I was a schoolboy there. I did not remember her as having served in that capacity; but we had many little anecdotes to tell to each other of remarkable boys, incidents, and adventures, which had made a noise in their day in that small town. These two persons were induced afterwards to settle at Rydal, where they both died.

The church, as already noticed, is that of Grasmere. The interior of it has been improved lately and made warmer by underdrawing the roof, and raising the floor; but the rude and antique majesty of its former appearance has been impaired by painting the rafters; and the oak benches, with a simple rail at the back dividing them from each other, have given way to seats that have more the appearance of pews. It is remarkable that, excepting only the pew belonging to Rydal Hall, that to Rydal Mount, the one to the Parsonage, and I believe another, the men and women still continue, as used to be the custom in Wales, to sit separate from each other. Is this practice as old as the Reformation? and when and how did it originate? In the Jewish synagogues, and in Lady Huntingdon's chapels, the sexes are divided in the same way. In the adjoining churchyard greater changes have taken place. It is now not a little crowded with tombstones; and near the school-house, which stands in the churchyard, is an ugly structure, built to receive the hearse, which is recently come

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into use. It would not be worth while to allude to this building, or the hearse-vehicle it contains, but that the latter has been the means of introducing a change much to be lamented in the mode of conducting funerals among the mountains. Now, the coffin is lodged in the hearse at the door of the house of the deceased, and the corpse is so conveyed to the churchyard gate. All the solemnity which formerly attended its progress, as described in this poem, is put an end to. So much do I regret this, that I beg to be excused for giving utterance here to a wish that, should it befall me to die at Rydal Mount, my own body may be carried to Grasmere Church after the manner in which, till lately, that of every one was borne to the place of sepulture here, namely, on the shoulders of neighbours; no house being passed without some words of a funeral psalm being sung at the time by the attendants bearing it. When I put into the mouth of the Wanderer, "Many precious rites and customs of our rural ancestry are gone, or stealing from us; this, I hope, will last for ever," and what follows, little did I foresee that the observance and mode of proceeding which had often affected me so much would so soon be superseded.

Having said much of the injury done to this churchyard, let me add, that one is at liberty to look forward to a time when, by the growth of the yew-trees thriving there, a solemnity will be spread over the place that will in some degree make amends for the old simple character which has already been so much encroached upon, and will be still more every year. I will here set down, by way of memorial, that my friend Sir George Beaumont, having long ago purchased the beautiful piece of water called Loughrigg Tarn, on the banks of which he intended to build, I told him that a person in Kendal who was attached to the place wished to purchase it. Sir George, finding the possession of no use to him, consented to part with it, and placed the purchase-money—£20—at my disposal, for any local use which I thought proper. Accordingly, I resolved to plant yew-trees in the churchyard; and had four pretty strong large oak enclosures made, in each of which was planted, under my own eye, and principally if not entirely by my own hand, two young trees, with the intention of leaving the one that throve best to stand. Many years after, Mr. Barber, who will long be remembered in Grasmere, Mr. Greenwood (the chief landed proprietor), and myself, had four other enclosures made in the churchyard at our own expense,

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in each of which was planted a tree taken from its neighbour, and they all stand thriving admirably, the fences having been removed as no longer necessary. May the trees be taken care of hereafter, when we are all gone; and some of them will perhaps, at some far-distant time, rival in majesty the yew of Lorton, and those which I have described as growing at Borrowdale, where they are still to be seen* in grand assemblage.

And now for the persons that are selected as lying in the churchyard. But first for the individual whose grave is prepared to receive him.

His story is here truly related. He was a schoolfellow of mine for some years. He came to us when he was at least seventeen years of age, very tall, robust, and full grown. This prevented him from falling into the amusements and games of the school; consequently, he gave more time to books. He was not remarkably bright or quick, but by industry, he made a progress more than respectable. His parents not being wealthy enough to send him to college when he left Hawkshead, he became a schoolmaster, with a view to prepare himself for holy orders. About this time he fell in love, as related in the poem, and everything followed as there described, except that I do not know exactly when and where he died. The number of youths that came to Hawkshead School from the families of the humble yeomanry, to be educated to a certain degree of scholarship, as a preparation for the church, was considerable, and the fortunes of those persons in after life various of course, and some not a little remarkable. I have now one of this class in my eye who became an usher in a preparatory school, and ended in making a large fortune. His manners, when he came to Hawkshead, were as uncouth as well could be; but he had good abilities, with skill to turn them to account; and when the master of the school, to which he was usher, died, he stept into his place and became proprietor of the establishment. He contrived to manage it with such address, and so much to the taste of what is called high society and the fashionable world, that no school of the kind, even till he retired, was in such high request. Ministers of State, the wealthiest gentry, and nobility of the first rank, vied with each other in bespeaking a place for their sons in the

* Alas! no longer as they were in Wordsworth's time. See the note to *Yew-Trees*, vol. ii. p. 371.—Ed.

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seminary of this fortunate teacher.* In the solitude of Grasmere, while living as a married man in a cottage of £8 per annum rent, I often used to smile at the tales which reached me of the brilliant career of this quondam clown—for such in reality he was, in manners, and appearance, before he was polished a little by attrition with gentlemen's sons trained at Hawkshead, rough and rude as many of our juveniles were. Not 200 yards from the cottage in Grasmere just mentioned, to which I retired, this gentleman, who many years afterwards purchased a small estate in the neighbourhood, is now erecting a boat-house, with an upper story to be resorted to as an entertaining room when he and his associates may feel inclined to take their pastime on the lake. Every passenger will be disgusted with the sight of this edifice, not merely as a tasteless thing in itself, but as utterly out of place, and peculiarly fitted, as far as it is observed (and it obtrudes itself on notice at every point of view), to mar the beauty and destroy the pastoral simplicity of the vale. For my own part, and that of my household, it is our utter detestation, standing by a shore to which, before the high road was made to pass that way, we used daily and hourly to repair for seclusion and for the shelter of a grove, under which I composed many of my poems—*The Brothers* especially; and for this reason we gave the grove that name.

> That which each man loved
> And prized in his peculiar nook of earth
> Dies with him, or is changed.

So much for my old schoolfellow and his exploits. I will only add that, as the foundation has twice failed, from the Lake no doubt being intolerant of the intrusion, there is some ground for hoping that the impertinent structure will not stand. It has been rebuilt in somewhat better taste, and much as one wishes it away, it is not now so very unsightly. The structure is an emblem of the man. Perseverance has conquered difficulties, and given something of form and polish to rudeness.†

The Miner, next described as having found his treasure after twice ten years of labour, lived in Paterdale, and the story is

* "Mr. Pearson." Pencilled on the opposite page of the MS.—Ed.

† Pencilled on the opposite page of the MS.—"This boathouse, badly built, gave way, and was rebuilt. It again tumbled, and was a third time reconstructed, but in a better fashion than before. It is not now, *per se*, an ugly building, however obtrusive it may be."—Ed.

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true to the letter. It seems to me, however, rather remarkable, that the strength of mind which had supported him through his long unrewarded labour, did not enable him to bear its successful issue. Several times in the course of my life I have heard of sudden influxes of great wealth being followed by derangement; and, in one instance, the shock of good fortune was so great as to produce absolute idiotcy. But these all happened where there had been little or no previous effort to acquire the riches, and therefore such a consequence might the more naturally be expected, than in the case of the solitary miner. In reviewing his story, one cannot but regret that such perseverance was not sustained by a worthier object. Archimedes leaped out of his bath and ran about the streets, proclaiming his discovery in a transport of joy; but we are not told that he lost either his life or his senses in consequence.

The next character, to whom the priest is led by contrast with the resoluteness displayed by the foregoing, is taken from a person born and bred in Grasmere, by name Dawson; and whose talents, dispositions, and way of life, were such as are here delineated. I did not know him, but all was fresh in memory when we settled at Grasmere in the beginning of the century. From this point the conversation leads to the mention of two individuals, who, by their several fortunes, were, at different times, driven to take refuge at the small and obscure town of Hawkshead on the skirt of these mountains. Their stories I had from the dear old dame with whom, as a schoolboy, and afterwards, I lodged for nearly the space of ten years. The elder, the Jacobite, was named Drummond, and was of a high family in Scotland; the Hanoverian Whig bore the name of Vandeput, and might, perhaps, be a descendant of some Dutchman who had come over in the train of King William. At all events, his zeal was such, that he ruined himself by a contest for the representation of London or Westminster, undertaken to support his Party, and retired to this corner of the world, selected (as it had been by Drummond) for that obscurity which, since visiting the Lakes became fashionable, it has no longer retained. So much was this region considered out of the way till a late period, that persons who had fled from justice used often to resort hither for concealment, and some were so bold as to not unfrequently make excursions from the place of their retreat for the purpose of committing fresh offences. Such was particularly the case with two brothers of the name of Weston, who took up their abode at Old Brathay, I

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think about seventy years ago. They were highwaymen, and lived there some time without being discovered, though it was known that they often disappeared, in a way, and upon errands, which could not be accounted for. Their horses were noticed as being of a choice breed, and I have heard from the Relph family, one of whom was a saddler in the town of Kendal, that they were curious in their saddles, and housings, and accoutrements of their horses. They, as I have heard, and as was universally believed, were, in the end, both taken and hanged.

> Tall was her stature; her complexion dark
> And saturnine.

This person lived at Town-end, and was almost our next neighbour. I have little to notice concerning her beyond what is said in the poem. She was a most striking instance how far a woman may surpass in talent, in knowledge, and culture of mind, those with and among whom she lives, and yet fall below them in Christian virtues of the heart and spirit. It seemed almost, and I say it with grief, that in proportion as she excelled in the one, she failed in the other. How frequently has one to observe in both sexes the same thing, and how mortifying is the reflection!

> As, on a sunny bank, a tender lamb
> Lurks in safe shelter from the winds of March.

The story that follows was told to Mrs. Wordsworth and my sister, by the sister of this unhappy young woman. Every particular was exactly as I have related. The party was not known to me, though she lived at Hawkshead; but it was after I left school. The clergyman who administered comfort to her in her distress I knew well. Her sister, who told the story, was the wife of a leading yeoman in the vale of Grasmere, and they were an affectionate pair, and greatly respected by every one who knew them. Neither lived to be old; and their estate—which was, perhaps, the most considerable then in the vale, and was endeared to them by many remembrances of a salutary character, not easily understood or sympathised with by those who are born to great affluence—passed to their eldest son, according to the practice of these vales, who died soon after he came into possession. He was an amiable and promising youth, but was succeeded by an only brother, a good-natured man, who fell into habits of drinking, by which he gradually reduced his property; and the other day the last acre of it was

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sold, and his wife and children, and he himself still surviving, have very little left to live upon; which it would not, perhaps, have been worth while to record here, but that through all trials this woman has proved a model of patience, meekness, affectionate forbearance, and forgiveness. Their eldest son, who through the vices of his father has thus been robbed of an ancient family inheritance, was never heard to murmur or complain against the cause of their distress, and is now (1843) deservedly the chief prop of his mother's hopes.

The Clergyman and his family described at the beginning of the seventh book were, during many years, our principal associates in the vale of Grasmere, unless I were to except our very nearest neighbours. I have entered so particularly into the main points of their history, that I will barely testify in prose that—with the single exception of the particulars of their journey to Grasmere, which, however, was exactly copied from real life in another instance—the whole that I have said of them is as faithful to the truth as words can make it. There was much talent in the family, and the eldest son was distinguished for poetical talent, of which a specimen is given in my notes to the Sonnets to the Duddon. Once, when in our cottage at Town-end I was talking with him about poetry, in the course of our conversation I presumed to find fault with the versification of Pope, of whom he was an enthusiastic admirer. He defended him with a warmth that indicated much irritation; nevertheless I would not abandon my point, and said, "In compass and variety of sound your own versification surpasses his." Never shall I forget the change in his countenance and tone of voice: the storm was laid in a moment; he no longer disputed my judgment, and I passed immediately in his mind, no doubt, for as great a critic as ever lived. I ought to add, he was a clergyman and a well-educated man, and his verbal memory was the most remarkable of any individual I have known, except a Mr. Archer, an Irishman, who lived several years in this neighbourhood, and who in this faculty was a prodigy: he afterwards became deranged, and I fear continues so if alive.

Then follows the character of Robert Walker, for which see notes to the Duddon.

That of the *Deaf Man*, whose epitaph may be seen in the churchyard at the head of Hawes Water, and whose qualities of mind and heart, and their benign influence in conjunction with his privation, I had from his relatives on the spot.

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The *Blind Man*, next commemorated, was John Gough, of Kendal, a man known, far beyond his neighbourhood, for his talents and attainments in natural history and science.

Of the *Infant's Grave* next noticed, I will only say, it is an exact picture of what fell under my own observation; and all persons who are intimately acquainted with cottage life must often have observed like instances of the working of the domestic affections.

> A volley thrice repeated o'er the corse
> Let down into the hollow of that grave.

This young volunteer bore the name of Dawson, and was younger brother, if I am not mistaken, to the prodigal of whose character and fortunes an account is given towards the beginning of the preceding book. The father of the family I knew well; he was a man of literary education and considerable experience in society—much beyond what was common among the inhabitants of the Vale. He had lived a good while in the Highlands of Scotland as a manager of ironworks at Bunaw, and had acted as clerk to one of my predecessors in the office of Distributor of Stamps, when he used to travel round the country collecting and bringing home the money due to Government in gold, which it may be worth while to mention, for the sake of my friends, was deposited in the cell or iron closet under the west window, which still exists, with the iron doors that guarded the property. This, of course, was before the time of Bills and Notes. The two sons of this person had no doubt been led by the knowledge of their father to take more delight in scholarship, and had been accustomed, in their own minds, to take a wider view of social interests, than was usual among their associates. The premature death of this gallant young man was much lamented, and as an attendant upon the funeral, I myself witnessed the ceremony, and the effect of it as described in the poems.

> . . . . Tradition tells
> That, in Eliza's golden days, a Knight
> Came on a war-horse. . . .
> . . . . The house is gone.

The pillars of the gateway in front of the mansion remained when we first took up our abode at Grasmere. Two or three cottages still remain which are called Nott Houses, from the name of the gentleman (I have called him a knight) concerning whom these traditions survive. He was the ancestor of the Knott family, formerly considerable proprietors in the district.

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What follows in the discourse of the Wanderer, upon the changes he had witnessed in rural life by the introduction of machinery, is truly described from what I myself saw during my boyhood and early youth, and from what was often told me by persons of this humble calling. Happily, most happily, for these mountains, the mischief was diverted from the banks of their beautiful streams, and transferred to open and flat counties abounding in coal, where the agency of steam was found much more effectual for carrying on those demoralising works. Had it not been for this invention, long before the present time, every torrent and river in this district would have had its factory, large and populous in proportion to the power of the water that could there be commanded. Parliament has interfered to prevent the night-work which was once carried on in these mills as actively as during the day-time, and by necessity, still more perniciously; a sad disgrace to the proprietors and to the nation which could so long tolerate such unnatural proceedings.

Reviewing, at this late period, 1843, what I put into the mouths of my interlocutors a few years after the commencement of the century, I grieve that so little progress has been made in diminishing the evils deplored, or promoting the benefits of education which the Wanderer anticipates. The results of Lord Ashley's labours to defer the time when children might legally be allowed to work in factories, and his endeavours to limit still further the hours of permitted labour, have fallen far short of his own humane wishes, and of those of every benevolent and right-minded man who has carefully attended to this subject; and in the present session of Parliament (1843) Sir James Graham's attempt to establish a course of religious education among the children employed in factories has been abandoned, in consequence of what might easily be foreseen, the vehement and turbulent opposition of the Dissenters; so that for many years to come it may be thought expedient to leave the religious instruction of children entirely in the hands of the several denominations of Christians in the Island, each body to work according to its own means and in its own way. Such is my own confidence, a confidence I share with many others of my most valued friends, in the superior advantages, both religious and social, which attend a course of instruction presided over and guided by the clergy of the Church of England, that I have no doubt, that if but once its members, lay and clerical, were duly sensible of those benefits, their

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Church would daily gain ground, and rapidly, upon every shape and fashion of Dissent; and in that case, a great majority in Parliament being sensible of these benefits, the Ministers of the country might be emboldened, were it necessary, to apply funds of the State to the support of education on church principles. Before I conclude, I cannot forbear noticing the strenuous efforts made at this time in Parliament by so many persons to extend manufacturing and commercial industry at the expense of agricultural, though we have recently had abundant proofs that the apprehensions expressed by the Wanderer were not groundless.

> I spake of mischief by the wise diffused,
> With gladness thinking that the more it spreads
> The healthier, the securer, we become;
> Delusion which a moment may destroy!

The Chartists are well aware of this possibility, and cling to it with an ardour and perseverance which nothing, but wiser and more brotherly dealing towards the many, on the part of the wealthy few, can moderate or remove.

> While, from the grassy mountain's open side
> We gazed, in silence hushed.

The point here fixed upon in my imagination is half way up the northern side of Loughrigg Fell, from which the Pastor and his companions are supposed to look upwards to the sky and mountain-tops, and round the vale, with the lake lying immediately beneath them.

> But turned, not without welcome promise given
> That he would share the pleasures and pursuits
> Of yet another summer's day, consumed
> In wandering with us.

When I reported this promise of the Solitary, and long after, it was my wish, and I might say intention, that we should resume our wanderings and pass the Borders into his native country, where, as I hoped, he might witness, in the society of the Wanderer, some religious ceremony—a sacrament say, in the open fields, or a preaching among the mountains—which, by recalling to his mind the days of his early childhood, when he had been present on such occasions in company with his parents and nearest kindred, might have dissolved his heart into tenderness, and so done more towards restoring the Christian faith in which he had been educated, and, with

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that, contentedness and even cheerfulness of mind, and all that the Wanderer and Pastor by their several effusions and addresses had been unable to effect. An issue like this was in my intentions. But alas !

————'mid the wreck of is and was,
Things incomplete and purposes betrayed
Make sadder transits o'er thought's optic glass
Than noblest objects utterly decayed.*

RYDAL MOUNT, *June* 24, 1843.
St. John Baptist Day.—I. F.]

Although the Fenwick note to *The Excursion* has been printed here in full, extracts from it will be introduced as footnotes, in explanation of certain passages of the poem. *The Excursion* was written at intervals between 1795 and 1814. The story of Margaret, in the first book, was begun at Racedown in 1795, and continued at Alfoxden in 1797-8. But only two short fragments of the poem—the former in book first and the latter in book fourth (as indicated in the Fenwick note)—were written before Wordsworth's arrival at Grasmere. There the poem was thought out, arranged, written down, altered, and re-arranged; the first part during his residence at Dove Cottage, the second and longer part at Allan Bank. The following extracts from Miss Wordsworth's Grasmere Journal show how laboriously her brother worked at this poem :—

Tuesday, Dec. 22, 1801.— . . . "Went to Rydal for letters. The road was covered with snow. We walked home almost without speaking. William composed a few lines of 'The Pedlar.' We talked about Lamb's tragedy." . . .

Wednesday, Dec. 23.— . . . "Mary wrote out the Tales from Chaucer for Coleridge. William worked at 'The Ruined Cottage,' and made himself very ill." . . .

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 1802.— . . . "We sate till we were both tired, for William wrote out part of his poem, and endeavoured to alter it, and so made himself ill. I copied out the rest for him." . . .

Monday, Feb. 1st.— . . . "William worked hard at 'The Pedlar,' and tired himself." . . .

Tuesday, 2nd Feb.— . . . "William worked at 'The Pedlar.'" . . .

* Compare the sonnet *Malham Cove* in volume vi., to which these lines belong.—ED.

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Thursday, 4th.— . . . "William thought a little about 'The Pedlar.'"

Friday, 5th.— . . . "Sate up late at 'The Pedlar.'"

Sunday, 7th.—"William had a bad night, and was working at his poem. We sate by the fire, and did not walk, but read 'The Pedlar,' thinking it done; but lo! . . . could find fault with no one part of it—it was uninteresting, and must be altered. Poor William!"

Wednesday, 10th Feb.—"We read the first part of the poem, and were delighted with it, but William afterwards got to some ugly place, and went to bed tired out." . . .

Thursday, 11th.— . . . "William sadly tired, and working at 'The Pedlar.'"

Friday, 12th.— . . . "I re-copied 'The Pedlar'; but poor William all the time at work. . . . We sate a long time with the window unclosed, and almost finished writing 'The Pedlar,' but poor William wore himself out and me with labour. Went to bed at 12 o'clock."

Saturday, 13th.—"It snowed a little. Still at work at 'The Pedlar,' altering and re-fitting. . . . William read parts of his *Recluse* aloud to me." . . .

Sunday, 14th Feb.— . . . "William left me at work altering some passages of 'The Pedlar,' and went into the orchard."

Sunday, Feb. 28.— . . . "William very ill; employed himself with 'The Pedlar.'"

Friday morning.— . . . "I wrote 'The Pedlar,' and finished it." . . .

These extracts—which will recall the laborious way in which he toiled over the poem *Michael* (see vol. ii. p. 233)—all refer to the close of the year 1801, and the beginning of the year 1802. It is impossible to find out, with exactness, what were the parts of *The Excursion* which were then so carefully written, and so fastidiously altered—since "The Pedlar" was the Wordsworth household name for the entire poem, until it was recast for publication, at Allan Bank. But after February 1802 he turned to other subjects of composition, chiefly lyrical, and laid aside "The Pedlar" for a time—his sister, at least, regarding it as "finished." What was completed, however, did not, probably, extend beyond the story of the Wanderer, and perhaps a part of that of the Solitary. The person, whose character gave rise to the Solitary, came to reside at Grasmere not long after the Wordsworths settled there; but as the

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Fenwick note expressly says that the poem was written "*chiefly* during our residence at Allan Bank," I do not think that more than the first two books belong to the Town-end period.

The Excursion was originally published in quarto in 1814. The second edition, octavo, appeared in 1820.*

The Excursion was included in all the collected editions of 1827, 1832, 1836-7, 1840, 1845, 1849-50, in the Paris reprint of 1828, and in the American edition by Henry Reed. It was also republished by itself in 1836, 1844, and 1847. The textual changes in the several editions were numerous and significant. The longest and most important passage in the earlier ones, omitted after 1820, occurs at the close of the sixth book. Another (shorter) fragment, near the beginning of book seventh, refers to the Sympson household at the Wytheburn parsonage. No edition of *The Excursion* has as yet been issued with adequate notes, either topographical or literary. The first book—"The Wanderer"—has, however, been annotated, both by Mr. H. H. Turner (published in Rivington's English School Classics), and also by the Rev. H. G. Robinson, Prebendary of York, and published at Edinburgh, by Messrs. Oliver and Boyd.

The following letter from Charles Lamb to Wordsworth, after his first perusal of *The Excursion* has special interest :—

August 14, 1814.

"DEAR WORDSWORTH—I cannot tell you how pleased I was at the receipt of the great armful of poetry which you have sent me; and to get it before the rest of the world too! I have gone quite through with it, and was thinking to have accomplished that pleasure a second time before I wrote to thank you, but M. Burney came in the night (while we were out) and made holy theft of it, but we expect restitution in a day or two. It is the noblest conversational poem I ever read—a day in Heaven. The part (or rather main body) which has left the sweetest odour on my memory (a bad term

---

* The following note from Wordsworth to Mr. Dyce, shews his estimation of the text of the first octavo edition, as compared with that of the earlier quarto edition.

"MY DEAR SIR,—When you read *The Excursion* do not read the quarto. It is improved in the 8vo E. :—but I thought the quarto might have its value with you as a collector.—Believe me, faithfully yours,

"W. WORDSWORTH."

7th April, my birthday—61,
12 Bryanston Street.

In 1820 there are very few departures from the text of 1814.—ED.

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for the remains of an impression so recent) is the Tales of the Churchyard; the only girl among seven brethren, born out of due time, and not duly taken away again,—the deaf man and the blind man; the Jacobite and the Hanoverian, whom antipathies reconcile; the Scarron-entry of the rusticating parson upon his solitude;—these were all new to me too. My having known the story of Margaret (at the beginning), a very old acquaintance, even as long back as when I saw you first at Stowey, did not make her reappearance less fresh. I don't know what to pick out of this best of books upon the best subjects for partial naming. That gorgeous sunset* is famous; I think it must have been the identical one we saw on Salisbury Plain five years ago, that drew Phillips from the card-table, where he had sat from rise of that luminary to its unequalled set; but neither he nor I had gifted eyes to see those symbols of common things glorified, such as the prophets saw them in that sunset—the wheel, the potter's clay, the wash-pot, the wine-press, the almond-tree rod, the basket of figs, the fourfold visaged head, the throne, and Him that sat thereon. One feeling I was particularly struck with, as what I recognised so very lately at Harrow Church on entering in it after a hot and secular day's pleasure, the instantaneous coolness and calming, almost transforming properties of a country church just entered; a certain fragrance which it has, either from its holiness, or being kept shut all the week, or the air that is let in being pure country, exactly what you have reduced into words; but I am feeling that which I cannot express. Reading your lines about it fixed me for a time, a monument in Harrow Church. Do you know it? with its fine long spire, white as washed marble, to be seen, by vantage of its high site, as far as Salisbury spire itself almost."

In a letter written in the same year, 1814, Lamb tells Wordsworth of the spurious review of *The Excursion*, in *The Quarterly Review*, "which Mr. Baviad Gifford has palmed upon it for mine," calls his own review "the prettiest piece of prose I ever writ," and gives a specimen of it, viz.—

"The poet of the *Excursion* 'walks through common forests as through some Dodona or enchanted wood, and every casual bird that flits upon the boughs, like that miraculous one in Tasso, but in language more piercing than any articulate sounds,

* In a subsequent letter (August 29th) he corrects this, and calls it "that celestial splendour of the mist going off."—Ed.

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reveals to him far higher love-lays.'" (*The Letters of Charles Lamb*, edited by Alfred Ainger, vol. i. pp. 271-281.)

In the Notes to the text I have confined myself chiefly to the explanation of obscure allusions, topographical, historical, or legendary.—ED.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE WILLIAM, EARL OF LONSDALE, K.G., ETC. ETC.

OFT, through thy fair domains,* illustrious Peer!
In youth I roamed, on youthful pleasures bent;
And mused in rocky cell or sylvan tent,
Beside swift-flowing Lowther's current clear.†
—Now, by thy care befriended, I appear
Before thee, LONSDALE, and this Work present,
A token (may it prove a monument!)
Of high respect and gratitude sincere.
Gladly would I have waited till my task
Had reached its close; but Life is insecure,
And Hope full oft fallacious as a dream:
Therefore, for what is here produced, I ask
Thy favour; trusting that thou wilt not deem
The offering, though imperfect, premature.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

RYDAL MOUNT, WESTMORELAND,
July 29, 1814.

PREFACE TO THE EDITION OF 1814

THE Title-page announces that this is only a portion of a poem; and the Reader must be here apprised that

* The grounds of Lowther Castle. Compare the sonnet in "Poems, composed or suggested during a Tour, in the Summer of 1833," beginning—
Lowther! in thy majestic Pile are seen. ED.

† The Lowther stream, rising among the Shap Fells, joins the Emont at Brougham Castle.—ED.

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it belongs to the second part of a long and laborious Work, which is to consist of three parts.—The Author will candidly acknowledge that, if the first of these had been completed, and in such a manner as to satisfy his own mind, he should have preferred the natural order of publication, and have given that to the world first; but, as the second division of the Work was designed to refer more to passing events, and to an existing state of things, than the others were meant to do, more continuous exertion was naturally bestowed upon it, and greater progress made here than in the rest of the poem; and as this part does not depend upon the preceding, to a degree which will materially injure its own peculiar interest, the Author, complying with the earnest entreaties of some valued Friends, presents the following pages to the Public.

It may be proper to state whence the poem, of which *The Excursion* is a part, derives its Title of THE RECLUSE.—Several years ago, when the Author retired to his native mountains, with the hope of being enabled to construct a literary Work that might live, it was a reasonable thing that he should take a review of his own mind, and examine how far Nature and Education had qualified him for such employment. As subsidiary to this preparation, he undertook to record, in verse, the origin and progress of his own powers, as far as he was acquainted with them. That Work,* addressed to a dear Friend, most distinguished for his knowledge and genius, and to whom the Author's Intellect is deeply indebted, has been long finished; and the result of the investigation which gave rise to it was a determination to compose a philosophical poem, containing views of Man, Nature, and Society; and to be entitled, *The Recluse;* as having for its principal subject the sensations and opinions of a poet living in retirement.—The preparatory poem * is biographical, and conducts the

* *The Prelude.*—ED.

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history of the Author's mind to the point when he was emboldened to hope that his faculties were sufficiently matured for entering upon the arduous labour which he had proposed to himself; and the two Works have the same kind of relation to each other, if he may so express himself, as the ante-chapel has to the body of a gothic church. Continuing this allusion, he may be permitted to add, that his minor Pieces, which have been long before the Public, when they shall be properly arranged,* will be found by the attentive Reader to have such connection with the main Work as may give them claim to be likened to the little cells, oratories, and sepulchral recesses, ordinarily included in those edifices.

The Author would not have deemed himself justified in saying, upon this occasion, so much of performances either unfinished, or unpublished, if he had not thought that the labour bestowed by him upon what he has heretofore and now laid before the Public, entitled him to candid attention for such a statement as he thinks necessary to throw light upon his endeavours to please and, he would hope, to benefit his countrymen.—Nothing further need be added, than that the first and third parts of *The Recluse* will consist chiefly of meditations in the Author's own person; and that in the intermediate part (*The Excursion*) the intervention of characters speaking is employed, and something of a dramatic form adopted.

It is not the Author's intention formally to announce a system: it was more animating to him to proceed in a different course; and if he shall succeed in conveying to the mind clear thoughts, lively images, and strong feelings, the Reader will have no difficulty in extracting the system for himself. And in the mean time the following passage, taken from the conclusion of the first book of *The Recluse*, may be acceptable as a kind of *Prospectus* of the design and scope of the whole Poem.

* As they were—according to their Author's somewhat arbitrary classification—in the editions of 1815 and subsequent years.—Ed.

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"On Man, on Nature, and on Human Life,
Musing in solitude, I oft perceive
Fair trains of imagery before me rise,
Accompanied by feelings of delight
Pure, or with no unpleasing sadness mixed;
And I am conscious of affecting thoughts
And dear remembrances, whose presence soothes
Or elevates the Mind, intent to weigh
The good and evil of our mortal state.
—To these emotions, whencesoe'er they come,
Whether from breath of outward circumstance,
Or from the Soul—an impulse to herself—
I would give utterance in numerous verse.
Of Truth, of Grandeur, Beauty, Love, and Hope,
And melancholy Fear subdued by Faith;
Of blessed consolations in distress;
Of moral strength, and intellectual Power;
Of joy in widest commonalty spread;
Of the individual Mind that keeps her own
Inviolate retirement, subject there
To Conscience only, and the law supreme
Of that Intelligence which governs all—
I sing:—'fit audience let me find though few!' *

"So prayed, more gaining than he asked, the Bard—
In holiest mood.[1] Urania,† I shall need
Thy guidance, or a greater Muse, if such
Descend to earth or dwell in highest heaven!
For I must tread on shadowy ground, must sink
Deep—and, aloft ascending, breathe in worlds
To which the heaven of heavens is but a veil.

---

[1] 1845.
Holiest of Men.— . . . . . . 1814.

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* See *Paradise Lost*, book vii. l. 31.—Ed.

† "Daughter of Zeus and Mnemosyne. She was regarded as the Muse of Astronomy, and was represented with a celestial globe, to which she points with a little staff" (Hirt. *Mythol. Bilderb.* p. 210).—Ed.

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All strength—all terror, single or in bands,
That ever was put forth in personal form—
Jehovah—with his thunder, and the choir
Of shouting Angels, and the empyreal thrones—
I pass them unalarmed. Not Chaos, not
The darkest pit of lowest Erebus,
Nor aught of blinder vacancy, scooped out
By help of dreams—can breed such fear and awe
As fall upon us often when we look
Into our Minds, into the Mind of Man—
My haunt, and the main region of my song.
—Beauty—a living Presence of the earth,
Surpassing the most fair ideal Forms
Which craft of delicate Spirits hath composed
From earth's materials—waits upon my steps;
Pitches her tents before me as I move,
An hourly neighbour. Paradise, and groves
Elysian, Fortunate Fields—like those of old
Sought in the Atlantic Main *—why should they be
A history only of departed things,
Or a mere fiction of what never was?
For the discerning intellect of Man,
When wedded to this goodly universe
In love and holy passion, shall find these
A simple produce of the common day.
—I, long before the blissful hour arrives,
Would chant, in lonely peace, the spousal verse
Of this great consummation:—and, by words
Which speak of nothing more than what we are,
Would I arouse the sensual from their sleep
Of Death, and win the vacant and the vain
To noble raptures; while my voice proclaims
How exquisitely the individual Mind
(And the progressive powers perhaps no less
Of the whole species) to the external World

* Compare *The Prelude*, book i. l. 191 (see vol. iii. p. 138, notes * and †); Strabo, 1; Pliny, 6, c. 31 and 32; Horace, *Odes* iv., 8, v. 27; Plutarch, *The Life of Sertorius*.—Ed.

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Is fitted :—and how exquisitely, too—
Theme this but little heard of among men—
The external World is fitted to the Mind ;
And the creation (by no lower name
Can it be called) which they with blended might
Accomplish :—this is our high argument.
—Such grateful haunts foregoing, if I oft
Must turn elsewhere—to travel near the tribes
And fellowships of men, and see ill sights
Of madding passions mutually inflamed ;
Must hear Humanity in fields and groves
Pipe solitary anguish ; or must hang
Brooding above the fierce confederate storm
Of sorrow, barricadoed evermore
Within the walls of cities—may these sounds
Have their authentic comment ; that even these
Hearing, I be not downcast or forlorn !—
Descend, prophetic Spirit ![1] that inspir'st
The human Soul of universal earth,
Dreaming on things to come ; * and dost possess
A metropolitan temple in the hearts
Of mighty Poets : upon me bestow
A gift of genuine insight ; that my Song
With star-like virtue in its place may shine,
Shedding benignant influence, and secure,
Itself, from all malevolent effect
Of those mutations that extend their sway
Throughout the nether sphere !—And if with this
I mix more lowly matter ; with the thing
Contemplated, describe the Mind and Man
Contemplating ; and who, and what he was—
The transitory Being that beheld
This Vision ; when and where, and how he lived ;—
Be not this labour useless. If such theme

[1] 1827.
—Come thou prophetic Spirit, ... 1814.

* See Wordsworth's note (p. 383).—Ed.

May sort with highest objects, then—dread Power!
Whose gracious favour is the primal source
Of all illumination—may my Life
Express the image of a better time,
More wise desires, and simpler manners;—nurse
My Heart in genuine freedom:—all pure thoughts
Be with me;—so shall thy unfailing love
Guide, and support, and cheer me to the end!"

Book First

THE WANDERER *

ARGUMENT

A summer forenoon—The Author reaches a ruined Cottage upon a Common, and there meets with a revered Friend, the Wanderer, of whose education and course of life he gives an account[1]*—The Wanderer, while resting under the shade of the Trees that surround the Cottage, relates the History of its last Inhabitant.*

'TWAS summer, and the sun had mounted high:
Southward the landscape indistinctly glared
Through a pale steam; † but all the northern downs,
In clearest air ascending, showed far off
A surface dappled o'er with shadows flung

[1] 1836.
the Wanderer, of whom he gives an account— 1814.

* In a copy of the quarto edition of *The Excursion* (1814) bequeathed by the Poet to his grandson, the Rev. John Wordsworth, there are numerous changes of text in his own handwriting, or that of his wife. The majority of these were incorporated in later editions. Several of them, however, were not. These are reproduced in this edition, wherever it has been thought expedient to preserve them, and are indicated as "MS." readings. On the fly-leaf of the same presentation copy of the 1814 edition, Mrs. Wordsworth wrote out Mr. R. P. Gillies' sonnet, addressed to the author of *The Excursion.*—ED.

† Compare *An Evening Walk* (vol. i. p. 9)—

When, in the south, the wan noon, brooding still,
Breathed a pale steam around the glaring hill. ED.

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From brooding clouds; shadows that lay in spots[1]
Determined and unmoved, with steady beams
Of bright and pleasant sunshine interposed;
To him most pleasant who on soft cool moss[2]
Extends his careless limbs along the front
Of some huge cave, whose rocky ceiling casts
A twilight of its own,* an ample shade,
Where the wren warbles, while the dreaming man,
Half conscious of the soothing melody,
With side-long eye looks out upon the scene,†
By power of that impending covert, thrown,
To finer distance. Mine was at that hour
Far other lot, yet with good hope that soon
Under a shade as grateful I should find
Rest, and be welcomed there to livelier joy.[3]
Across a bare wide Common I was toiling

---

[1] 1827.
From many a brooding cloud; far as the sight
Could reach, those many shadows lay in spots 1814.

[2] 1845.
Pleasant to him who on the soft cool moss 1814.

[3] 1845.
By that impending covert made more soft,
More low and distant! Other lot was mine;
Yet with good hope that soon I should obtain
As grateful resting-place, and livelier joy. 1814.

By power of that impending covert thrown
To finer distance. Other lot was mine; 1827.

. . . . Other lot was mine;
Though with good hope to cheer the sultry hour
That under shade as grateful I should soon
Rest, and be welcomed there to livelier joy. C.

. . . . Mine was at that hour
A toilsome lot, yet with good hope that soon
Under a shade as grateful I should find C.

---

* Compare *An Evening Walk* (vol. i. p. 11)—
And its own twilight softens the whole scene. ED.

† Compare the sonnet composed in boyhood, beginning—
Sweet was the walk along the narrow lane,
and printed in an Appendix to vol. viii.—ED.

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With languid steps that by the slippery turf[1]
Were baffled; nor could my weak arm disperse
The host of insects gathering round my face,
And ever with me as I paced along.[2]

Upon that open moorland stood a grove,
The wished-for port to which my course was bound.[3]
Thither I came, and there, amid the gloom
Spread by a brotherhood of lofty elms,*
Appeared a roofless Hut; four naked walls
That stared upon each other!—I looked round,
And to my wish and to my hope espied
The Friend I sought;[4] a Man of reverend age,
But stout and hale, for travel unimpaired.
There was he seen upon the cottage-bench,
Recumbent in the shade, as if asleep;
An iron-pointed staff lay at his side.

Him had I marked the day before—alone
And stationed in the public way, with face

---

[1] 1845.
With languid feet, which by the slippery ground 1814.
With languid steps that . . . . . 1827.

[2] Across a bare wide common I was toiling
When oft each footstep by the slippery turf
Was baffled: nor could my arm disperse
The host of insects gathered round my face,
And ever with me as I paced along.
Now with eyes turned towards the far-distant hills,
Now towards a grove that from the wide-spread moor
Rose up! the port to which my course was bound. C.

[3] 1845.
Upon that open level stood a Grove,
The wished-for Port to which my steps were bound. 1814.
. . . . . . my course was bound. 1827.

[4] 1845.
Him whom I sought; . . . . . 1814.

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* Compare the *Sonnet composed at —— Castle*, in the "Memorials of a Tour in Scotland," 1803 (vol. ii. p. 410)—
A brotherhood of venerable Trees. ED.

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Turned toward the sun then setting, while that staff
Afforded, to the figure of the man [1]
Detained for contemplation or repose,
Graceful support; his countenance as he stood
Was hidden from my view, and he remained [2]
Unrecognised; but, stricken by the sight,
With slackened footsteps I advanced, and soon
A glad congratulation we exchanged
At such unthought-of meeting.—For the night
We parted, nothing willingly; and now
He by appointment waited for me here,
Under the covert [3] of these clustering elms.

We were tried Friends: amid a pleasant vale,
In the antique market-village where was passed
My school-time,* an apartment he had owned,
To which at intervals the Wanderer drew,[4]

[1] 1827.
And in the middle of the public way
Stationed, as if to rest himself, with face
Turned tow'rds the sun then setting, while that staff
Afforded to his Figure, as he stood, 1814.

Him had I chanced to mark the day before
Alone, and stationed in the public way;
Westward he looked as if his gaze were fixed
Upon the sun then setting, ... C.

[2] 1845.
. . . . . the countenance of the Man
Was hidden from my view, and he himself 1814.

. . . . . his countenance meanwhile
Was hidden from my view, and he remain'd 1827.

[3] C. and 1845.
Beneath the shelter . . . . 1814.

[4] 1845.
We were tried Friends: I from my Childhood up
Had known him.—In a little Town obscure,

* Hawkshead. Compare the notes to *The Prelude*, in books i. and ii. The Fenwick note tells us, "At Hawkshead, while I was a schoolboy, there occasionally resided a Packman, with whom I had frequent conversations upon what had befallen him, and what he had observed, during his wandering life; and, as was natural, we took much to each other."—Ed.

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And found a kind of home or harbour there.
He loved me; from a swarm of rosy boys
Singled out me, as he in sport would say,
For my grave looks, too thoughtful for my years.
As I grew up, it was my best delight
To be his chosen comrade. Many a time,
On holidays, we rambled through the woods:
We sate—we walked; he pleased me with report [1]
Of things which he had seen; and often touched
Abstrusest matter, reasonings of the mind
Turned inward; or at my request would sing [2]
Old songs, the product of his native hills; [3]
A skilful distribution of sweet sounds,
Feeding the soul, and eagerly imbibed
As cool refreshing water, by the care
Of the industrious husbandman, diffused
Through a parched meadow-ground, in time of drought.
Still deeper welcome found his pure discourse:
How precious when in riper days I learned
To weigh with care his words, and to rejoice
In the plain presence of his dignity!

Oh! many are the Poets that are sown
By Nature; men endowed with highest gifts,

A market-village, seated in a tract
Of mountains, where my school-day time was pass'd,
One room he owned, the fifth part of a house,
A place to which he drew, from time to time, 1814.

We were tried Friends: amid a pleasant vale,
In the antique market village where were pass'd
My school-days, an apartment he had own'd,
To which at intervals the Wanderer drew, 1827.

[1] 1827.
On holidays, we wandered through the woods,
A pair of random travellers; we sate—
We walked; he pleas'd me with his sweet discourse 1814.

[2] 1827.
. . . . he sang 1814.

[3] 1814.
Old songs brought with him from his native hills; C.

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The vision and the faculty divine; *
Yet wanting the accomplishment of verse,
(Which, in the docile season of their youth,
It was denied them to acquire, through lack
Of culture and the inspiring aid of books,
Or haply by a temper too severe,
Or a nice backwardness afraid of shame)
Nor having e'er, as life advanced, been led
By circumstance to take unto the height
The measure of themselves, these favoured Beings,
All but a scattered few, live out their time,
Husbanding that which they possess within,
And go to the grave, unthought of. Strongest minds
Are often those of whom the noisy world
Hears least; † else surely this Man had not left ‡
His graces unrevealed and unproclaimed.
But, as the mind was filled with inward light, §
So not without distinction had he lived,
Beloved and honoured—far as he was known.
And some small portion of his eloquent speech,
And something that may serve to set in view
The feeling pleasures of his loneliness,
His observations, and the thoughts his mind[1]
Had dealt with—I will here record in verse;

[1] 1827.

The doings, observations, which his mind 1814.

His habits, observations, and the thoughts
He cherished— . . . . . . MS.

* Compare the *Elegiac Stanzas, suggested by a Picture of Peele Castle, in a Storm* (vol. iii. p. 54)—

The consecration, and the Poet's dream;

and the Discourse on Poetry in the Preface to the "Lyrical Ballads" of 1800. See the *Prose Works*.—Ed.

† Compare Sir Henry Taylor, *Philip van Artevelde*, act I. scene v.—

The world knows nothing of its greatest men. Ed.

‡ Compare Horace, *Epistles* i. 17, 10—

Nec vixit male qui natus moriensque fefellit. Ed.

§ Compare *Elegiac Stanzas, suggested by a Picture of Peele Castle* (vol. iii. p. 54)—

The light that never was, on sea or land. Ed.

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Which, if with truth it correspond, and sink
Or rise as venerable Nature leads,
The high and tender Muses shall accept
With gracious smile, deliberately pleased,
And listening Time reward with sacred praise.

Among the hills of Athol he was born;
Where,[1] on a small hereditary farm,
An unproductive slip of rugged ground,
His Parents, with their numerous offspring, dwelt;[2]
A virtuous household, though exceeding poor!
Pure livers were they all, austere and grave,
And fearing God;* the very children taught
Stern self-respect, a reverence for God's word,
And an habitual piety, maintained
With strictness scarcely known on English ground.

From his sixth year, the Boy of whom I speak,
In summer, tended cattle on the hills;
But, through the inclement and the perilous days

[1] 1827.
There, ... 1814.

[2] 1827.
His Father dwelt; and died in poverty;
While He, whose lowly fortune I retrace,
The youngest of three sons, was yet a babe,
A little One—unconscious of their loss.
But ere he had outgrown his infant days
His widowed Mother, for a second Mate,
Espoused the Teacher of the Village School;
Who on her offspring zealously bestowed
Needful instruction; not alone in arts
Which to his humble duties appertained,
But in the lore of right and wrong, the rule
Of human kindness, in the peaceful ways
Of honesty, and holiness severe.
A virtuous Household . . . . . 1814.

* Compare *Resolution and Independence*, stanza xiv. (vol. ii. p. 319)—
Such as grave Livers do in Scotland use,
Religious men, who give to God and man their dues. ED.

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Of long-continuing winter, he repaired,
Equipped with satchel, to a school, that stood [1]
Sole building on a mountain's dreary edge,
Remote from view [2] of city spire, or sound
Of minster clock! From that bleak tenement
He, many an evening, to his distant home
In solitude returning, saw the hills
Grow larger in the darkness; all alone
Beheld the stars come out above his head,
And travelled through the wood, with no one near
To whom he might confess the things he saw.

So the foundations of his mind were laid.
In such communion, not from terror free,*
While yet a child, and long before his time,
Had he [3] perceived the presence and the power
Of greatness; and deep feelings had impressed
So vividly great objects that they lay
Upon his mind like substances, whose presence
Perplexed the bodily sense. He had received [4]

---

[1] 1827.
To his Step-father's School, that stood alone, 1814.

[2] 1827.
Far from the sight . . . . 1814.

[3] 1836.
He had . . . . . . 1814.

[4] 1845.
. . . . . . had impressed
Great objects on his mind, with portraiture
And colour so distinct, that on his mind
They lay like substances, and almost seemed
To haunt the bodily sense. He had received 1814.

. . . . . . had impressed
Upon his mind great objects so distinct

---

* Compare Byron, *Childe Harold*, canto iv. stanza clxxxiv.—

From a boy
I wantoned with thy breakers—they to me
Were a delight; and if the freshening sea
Made them a terror,—'twas a pleasing fear. Ed

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[1] A precious gift; for, as he grew in years,
With these impressions would he still compare
All his remembrances, thoughts, shapes, and forms;
And, being still unsatisfied with aught
Of dimmer character, he thence attained
An active power to fasten images
Upon his brain; and on their pictured lines
Intensely brooded, even till they acquired
The liveliness of dreams.* Nor did he fail,
While yet a child, with a child's eagerness
Incessantly to turn his ear and eye
On all things which the moving seasons brought
To feed such appetite—nor this alone
Appeased his yearning:—in the after-day
Of boyhood, many an hour in caves forlorn,
And 'mid the hollow depths of naked crags
He sate, and even in their fixed lineaments,
Or from the power of a peculiar eye,
Or by creative feeling overborne,
Or by predominance of thought oppressed,
Even in their fixed and steady lineaments
He traced an ebbing and a flowing mind,
Expression ever varying!
Thus informed,
He had small need of books; for many a tale

In portraiture, in colouring so vivid,
That on his mind they lay like substances,
And almost indistinguishably mixed
With things of bodily sense. . . . . C.

1 (Vigorous in native genius as he was)
This line appeared only in 1814 and 1820.

* Compare *Ode, Intimations of Immortality*, stanza ix. (vol. viii.)—
those obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things, etc.
and *The Prelude*, book ii. l. 350 (vol. iii. p. 164)—
what I saw
Appeared like something in myself, a dream,
A prospect in the mind. ED.

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Traditionary, round the mountains hung,
And many a legend, peopling the dark woods,
Nourished Imagination in her growth,
And gave the Mind that apprehensive power
By which she is made quick to recognise
The moral properties and scope of things.
But eagerly he read, and read again,
Whate'er the minister's old shelf supplied;
The life and death of martyrs, who sustained,
With will inflexible, those fearful pangs
Triumphantly displayed in records left
Of persecution, and the Covenant—times
Whose echo rings through Scotland to this hour!
And there, by lucky hap, had been preserved
A straggling volume, torn and incomplete,
That left half-told * the preternatural tale,
Romance of giants, chronicle of fiends,
Profuse in garniture of wooden cuts
Strange and uncouth; dire faces, figures dire,
Sharp-kneed, sharp elbowed, and lean-ankled too,
With long and ghostly shanks—forms which once seen
Could never be forgotten!
In his heart,
Where Fear sate thus, a cherished visitant,
Was wanting yet the pure delight of love
By sound diffused, or by the breathing air,†
Or by the silent looks of happy things,‡

* Compare Milton, *Il Penseroso*, l. 109—

Or call up him that left half told
The story of Cambuscan bold. Ed.

† Compare *Lines Written in Early Spring* (vol. i. p. 269)—

And 'tis my faith that every flower
Enjoys the air it breathes. Ed.

‡ Compare *The Prelude*, book ii. l. 411 (vol. iii. p. 166)—

Communing . . . . . .
With every form of creature, as it looked
Towards the Uncreated with a countenance
Of adoration, with an eye of love. Ed.

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Or flowing from the universal face
Of earth and sky. But he had felt the power
Of Nature, and already was prepared,
By his intense conceptions, to receive
Deeply the lesson deep of love which he,
Whom Nature, by whatever means, has taught
To feel intensely, cannot but receive.

Such was the Boy—but for the growing Youth
What soul was his, when, from the naked top
Of some bold headland, he beheld the sun [1]
Rise up, and bathe the world in light! * He looked—
Ocean and earth, the solid frame of earth
And ocean's liquid mass, in gladness lay
Beneath him †:—Far and wide the clouds were touched,
And in their silent faces could he read [2]
Unutterable love. Sound needed none,

---

[1] 1827.

From early childhood, even, as hath been said,
From his sixth year, he had been sent abroad
In summer to tend herds: such was his task
Thenceforward 'till the later day of youth.
O then what soul was his, when, on the tops
Of the high mountains, he beheld the sun 1814.

[2] 1845.

And ocean's liquid mass, beneath him lay
In gladness and deep joy. The clouds were touch'd,
And in their silent faces did he read 1814.
. . . . . . could he read 1836.

---

* Compare book iv. ll. 111-14; also in Robert Browning's *Old Pictures in Florence*, stanza i.—

And washed by the morning water-gold,
Florence lay out on the mountain-side. ED.

† The sea is not visible from the hills of Athole, except from the summit of Ben y' Gloe, where it can be seen to the south-east in the clearest weather. Wordsworth did not care for local accuracy in this passage. It was quite unnecessary for his purpose. Compare his account of the morning walk near Hawkshead in *The Prelude*, and see the Appendix-note to book iv. l. 338 (vol. iii. p. 389).—ED.

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Nor any voice of joy;* his spirit drank
The spectacle: sensation, soul, and form,
All melted into him; they swallowed up
His animal being; in them did he live,
And by them did he live; they were his life.
In such access of mind, in such high hour
Of visitation from the living God,
Thought was not; in enjoyment it expired.
No thanks he breathed, he proffered no request;
Rapt into still communion that transcends
The imperfect offices of prayer and praise,
His mind was a thanksgiving to the power
That made him; it was blessedness and love!

A Herdsman on the lonely mountain tops,
Such intercourse was his, and in this sort
Was his existence oftentimes *possessed.*
O then how beautiful, how bright, appeared
The written promise! Early had he learned [1]
To reverence the volume that [2] displays
The mystery, the life which cannot die;
But in the mountains did he *feel* his faith.
All things, responsive to the writing, there [3]
Breathed immortality, revolving life,
And greatness still revolving; infinite:

---

[1] 1827.
. . . . He had early learned 1814.

[2] 1827.
. . . . . . which . . 1814.

[3] 1832.
There did he see the writing;—all things there 1814.
Responsive to the writing, all things there 1827.

---

* Compare *Lines composed a few miles above Tintern Abbey* (vol. ii. p. 54), in which Wordsworth speaks of the rock, the mountain, and the wood, their colours and their forms, as an appetite, a feeling, and a love—

That had no need of a remoter charm,
By thought supplied, nor any interest
Unborrowed from the eye. Ed.

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There littleness was not; the least of things
Seemed infinite; and there his spirit shaped
Her prospects, nor did he believe,—he *saw*.
What wonder if his being thus became
Sublime and comprehensive! Low desires,
Low thoughts had there no place; yet was his heart
Lowly; for he was meek in gratitude,
Oft as he called those ecstasies to mind,
And whence they flowed; and from them he acquired
Wisdom, which works thro' patience; thence he learned
In oft-recurring hours [1] of sober thought
To look on Nature with a humble heart,
Self-questioned where it did not understand,
And with a superstitious eye of love.

So passed the time; yet to the nearest town [2]
He duly went with what small overplus
His earnings might supply, and brought away
The book that [3] most had tempted his desires
While at the stall he read. Among the hills
He gazed upon that mighty orb of song,
The divine Milton.* Lore of different kind,
The annual savings of a toilsome life,
His School-master [4] supplied; books that explain
The purer elements of truth involved
In lines and numbers, and, by charm severe,
(Especially perceived where nature droops

---

[1] 1827.
In many a calmer hour . . . . . 1814.

[2] 1827.
. . . . yet to a neighbouring town 1814.

[3] 1827.
. . which . . . . . . 1814.

[4] 1827.
His Step-father . . . . 1814.

---

* Compare the line in the sonnet on Milton (vol. ii. p. 346)—
Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart. ED.

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And feeling is suppressed) preserve the mind
Busy in solitude and poverty.
These occupations oftentimes deceived
The listless hours, while in the hollow vale,
Hollow and green, he lay on the green turf
In pensive idleness. What could he do,
Thus daily thirsting, in that lonesome life
With blind endeavours?[1] Yet, still uppermost,
Nature was at his heart as if he felt,
Though yet he knew not how, a wasting power
In all things that[2] from her sweet influence
Might tend to wean him. Therefore with her hues,
Her forms, and with the spirit of her forms,
He clothed the nakedness of austere truth.
While yet he lingered in the rudiments
Of science, and among her simplest laws,
His triangles—they were the stars of heaven,
The silent stars! Oft did he take delight
To measure the altitude[3] of some tall crag
That[4] is the eagle's birth-place, or some peak
Familiar with forgotten years, that shows
Inscribed upon its visionary sides,[5]
The history of many a winter storm,
Or obscure records of the path of fire.*

[1] 1827.
. . . . . What could he do
With blind endeavours, in that lonesome life,
Thus thirsting daily? . . . . . . 1814.

[2] 1827.
. . . which . . . . . 1814.

[3] 1832.
. . . th' altitude . . . . . 1814.

[4] 1827.
Which . . . . 1814.

[5] 1845.
Inscribed, as with the silence of the thought,
Upon it's bleak and visionary sides, 1814.

* In this description of the eagle's birth-place, and the peak "familiar with forgotten years," Wordsworth probably wandered in imagination from

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And thus before his eighteenth year was told,
Accumulated feelings pressed his heart
With still increasing weight;[1] he was o'erpowered
By Nature; by the turbulence subdued
Of his own mind; by mystery and hope,
And the first virgin passion of a soul
Communing with the glorious universe.*
Full often wished he that the winds might rage
When they were silent: far more fondly now
Than in his earlier season did he love
Tempestuous nights—the conflict and the sounds
That live in darkness. From his intellect
And from the stillness of abstracted thought
He asked repose; and, failing oft to win[2]
The peace required, he scanned the laws of light
Amid the roar of torrents, where they send
From hollow clefts up to the clearer air
A cloud of mist, that smitten by the sun

---

[1] 1827.
With an increasing weight; . . . 1814.

[2] 1827.
He asked repose; and I have heard him say
That often, failing at this time to gain 1814.

---

the Athole district to Westmoreland, as this part of the poem was in all likelihood written in 1801-2. He visited the Athole country, with his sister, in 1803; going up as far as Blair, and returning: but there is no peak in that district (at least none that he would see) that shows

Inscribed upon its visionary sides,
The history of many a winter storm,
Or obscure records of the path of fire,

as does, for example, the Stob Dearg in the Buchaile Etive Mor group in Argyll, a peak which he saw in the course of his Scottish tour in that year. —Ed.

* Compare *Lines composed a few miles above Tintern Abbey* (vol. ii. p. 54)—

The sounding cataract
Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood.
Their colours and their forms, were then to me
An appetite. Ed.

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Varies its rainbow hues.[1] But vainly thus,
And vainly by all other means, he strove
To mitigate the fever of his heart.

In dreams, in study, and in ardent thought,
Thus was he reared; much wanting to assist
The growth of intellect, yet gaining more,[2]
And every moral feeling of his soul
Strengthened and braced, by breathing in content
The keen, the wholesome, air of poverty,
And drinking from the well of homely life.*
—But, from past liberty, and tried restraints,
He now was summoned to select the course
Of humble industry that[3] promised best
To yield him no unworthy maintenance.
Urged by his Mother, he essayed to teach
A village-school—but wandering thoughts were then
A misery to him; and the Youth resigned[4]
A task he was unable to perform.

---

[1] 1827.
A cloud of mist, which in the sunshine frames
A lasting tablet—for the observer's eye
Varying it's rainbow hues. . . . . 1814.

[2] 1827.
Thus, even from Childhood upward, was he reared;
For intellectual progress wanting much,
Doubtless, of needful help—yet gaining more; 1814.

[3] 1827.
. . . . which . . . . 1814.

[4] 1827.
The Mother strove to make her Son perceive
With what advantage he might teach a School
In the adjoining Village; but the Youth,
Who of this service made a short essay,
Found that the wanderings of his thought were then
A misery to him; that he must resign 1814.

---

* With this description of the boy and youth, compare Coleridge's words in *The Friend*, vol. iii. p. 46 (edition of 1818)—

"We have been discoursing of infancy, childhood, boyhood, and youth,

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That stern yet kindly Spirit,* who constrains
The Savoyard to quit his naked rocks,
The free-born Swiss to leave his narrow vales,
(Spirit attached to regions mountainous
Like their own stedfast clouds) did now impel
His restless mind to look abroad with hope.
—An irksome drudgery seems it to plod on,
Through hot and dusty ways, or pelting storm,
A vagrant Merchant under a heavy load,
Bent as he moves, and needing frequent rest;[1]
Yet do such travellers find their own delight;
And their hard service, deemed debasing now,
Gained merited respect in simpler times;
When squire, and priest, and they who round them dwelt
In rustic sequestration—all dependent
Upon the PEDLAR'S toil—supplied their wants,
Or pleased their fancies, with the wares he brought.
Not ignorant was the Youth that still no few
Of his adventurous countrymen were led
By perseverance in this track of life
To competence and ease:—to him it offered[2]

---

[1] 1836.

Through dusty ways, in storm, from door to door,
A vagrant Merchant bent beneath his load! 1814.

Through hot and dusty ways, or pelting storm, 1827.

[2] 1845.

. . . . . for him it bore 1814.

---

of pleasures lying upon the unfolding intellect plenteously as morning dew-drops—of knowledge inhaled insensibly like the fragrance—of dispositions stealing into the spirit like music from unknown quarters—of images uncalled for and rising up like exhalations, of hopes plucked like beautiful wild flowers from the ruined tombs that border the highways of antiquity, to make a garland for a living forehead: in a word, we have been treating of nature as a teacher of truth through joy and through gladness, and as a creatress of the faculties by a process of smoothness and delight. We have made no mention of fear, shame, sorrow, nor of ungovernable and vexing thoughts; because, although these have been and have done mighty service, they are overlooked in that stage of life when youth is passing into manhood, overlooked or forgotten."—ED.

* Enterprise. Compare the poem *To Enterprise*, which, Wordsworth says, "arose out of *The Italian Itinerant, and The Swiss Goatherd.*" Compare also the latter poem, No. xxv. of the "Memorials of a Tour on the Continent" (1820).—ED.

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Attractions manifold;—and this he chose.
—His Parents on the enterprise bestowed[1]
Their farewell benediction, but with hearts
Foreboding evil. From his native hills
He wandered far; much did he see of men,*
Their manners, their enjoyments, and pursuits,
Their passions and their feelings; chiefly those
Essential and eternal in the heart,
That,[2] 'mid the simpler forms of rural life,
Exist more simple in their elements,
And speak a plainer language.† In the woods,
A lone Enthusiast, and among the fields,
Itinerant in this labour, he had passed
The better portion of his time; and there
Spontaneously had his affections thriven
Amid the bounties of the year, the peace
And liberty of nature;[3] there he kept
In solitude and solitary thought
His mind in a just equipoise of love.
Serene it was, unclouded by the cares
Of ordinary life; unvexed, unwarped
By partial bondage. In his steady course,
No piteous revolutions had he felt,
No wild varieties of joy and grief.
Unoccupied by sorrow of its own,
His heart lay open; and, by nature tuned
And constant disposition of his thoughts

[1] 1827.
He asked his Mother's blessing; and, with tears
Thanking his second Father, asked from him
Paternal blessings. The good Pair bestowed 1814.

[2] 1827.
Which, ... 1814.

[3] 1827.
Upon the bounties of the year, and felt
The liberty of Nature; . . . . . 1814.

* See Wordsworth's note, p. 383.
† Compare the Preface to "Lyrical Ballads" (1800), in the *Prose Works*.—ED.

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To sympathy with man, he was alive
To all that was enjoyed where'er he went,
And all that was endured; for, in himself
Happy, and quiet in his cheerfulness,
He had no painful pressure from without
That made him turn aside from wretchedness
With coward fears. He could *afford* to suffer
With those whom he saw suffer. Hence it came
That in our best experience he was rich,
And in the wisdom of our daily life.
For hence, minutely, in his various rounds,
He had observed the progress and decay
Of many minds, of minds and bodies too;
The history of many families;
How they had prospered; how they were o'erthrown
By passion or mischance, or such misrule
Among the unthinking masters of the earth
As makes the nations groan.
This active course
He followed till provision for his wants
Had been obtained;—the Wanderer then resolved[1]
To pass the remnant of his days, untasked
With needless services, from hardship free.
His calling laid aside, he lived at ease:
But still he loved to pace the public roads
And the wild paths; and, by the summer's warmth
Invited, often would he leave his home
And journey far, revisiting the scenes
That to his memory were most endeared.[2]

[1] 1827.
. . . . . . —This active course,
Chosen in youth, through manhood he pursued,
Till due provision for his modest wants
Had been obtained;—and, thereupon, resolved 1814.

[2] 1827.
. . . and, when the summer's warmth
Invited him, would often leave his home
And journey far, revisiting those scenes
Which to his memory were most endeared. 1814.

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Religion ✓

—Vigorous in health, of hopeful spirits, undamped[1]
By worldly-mindedness or anxious care;
Observant, studious, thoughtful, and refreshed
By knowledge gathered up from day to day;
Thus had he lived a long and innocent life.

The Scottish Church, both on himself and those
With whom from childhood he grew up, had held
The strong hand of her purity; and still
Had watched him with an unrelenting eye.
This he remembered in his riper age
With gratitude, and reverential thoughts.
But by the native vigour of his mind,
By his habitual wanderings out of doors,
By loneliness, and goodness, and kind works,
Whate'er, in docile childhood or in youth,
He had imbibed of fear or darker thought
Was melted all away; so true was this,
That sometimes his religion seemed to me
Self-taught, as of a dreamer in the woods;
Who to the model of his own pure heart
Shaped[2] his belief, as grace divine inspired,
And[3] human reason dictated with awe.
—And surely never did there live on earth
A man of kindlier nature. The rough sports
And teasing ways of children vexed not him;
[4] Indulgent listener was he to the tongue
Of garrulous age; nor did the sick man's tale,

---

[1] 1827.
. . . . untouched 1814.

[2] 1827.
Framed . . . . 1814.

[3] 1836.
Or . . . . 1814.

[4] Nor could he bid them from his presence, tired
With questions and importunate demands:
These two lines appeared only in 1814 and 1820.

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To his fraternal sympathy addressed,
Obtain reluctant hearing.
Plain his garb;
Such as might suit a rustic Sire, prepared
For sabbath duties; yet he was a man
Whom no one could have passed without remark.
Active and nervous was his gait; his limbs
And his whole figure breathed intelligence.
Time had compressed the freshness of his cheek
Into a narrower circle of deep red,
But had not tamed his eye;* that, under brows
Shaggy and grey, had meanings which it brought
From years of youth;† which, like a Being made
Of many Beings, he had wondrous skill
To blend with knowledge of the years to come,
Human, or such as lie beyond the grave.

So was He framed; and such his course of life
Who now, with no appendage but a staff,
The prized memorial of relinquished toils,
Upon that cottage-bench reposed his limbs,
Screened from the sun. Supine the Wanderer lay,
His eyes as if in drowsiness half shut,
The shadows of the breezy elms above
Dappling his face. He had not heard the sound
Of my approaching steps, and in the shade
Unnoticed did I stand some minutes' space.[1]

---

[1] 1827.

. . . . He had not heard my steps
As I approached; and near him did I stand
Unnotic'd in the shade, some minutes' space. 1814.

---

* Compare *Simon Lee*, ll. 5-8 (vol. i. p. 263)—

Full five-and-thirty years he lived
A running huntsman merry;
And still the centre of his cheek
Is red as a ripe cherry.

Also the description of Margaret, p. 60 of this volume.—Ed.

† Compare *Resolution and Independence*, stanza xiii. (vol. ii. p. 318).

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At length I hailed him, seeing that his hat
Was moist with water-drops, as if the brim
Had newly scooped a running stream. He rose,
And ere our lively greeting into peace
Had settled, "'Tis," said I,[1] "a burning day:
My lips are parched with thirst, but you, it seems,[2]
Have somewhere found relief." He, at the word,
Pointing towards a sweet-briar, bade me climb
The fence where that aspiring shrub looked out
Upon the public way.[3] It was a plot
Of garden ground run wild, its matted weeds
Marked with the steps of those, whom, as they passed,
The gooseberry trees that shot in long lank slips,
Or currants, hanging from their leafless stems,
In scanty strings, had tempted to o'erleap[4]
The broken wall. I looked around, and there,
Where two tall hedge-rows of thick alder boughs
Joined in a cold damp nook, espied a well
Shrouded with willow-flowers and plumy fern.
My thirst I slaked, and, from the cheerless spot
Withdrawing, straightway to the shade returned
Where sate the old Man on the cottage-bench;
And, while, beside him, with uncovered head,

---

[1] 1827.
And ere the pleasant greeting that ensued
Was ended, "'Tis," said I, ... 1814.

[2] 1827.
. . . . but you, I guess, 1814.

[3] 1827.
. . . . He, at the word,
Pointing towards a sweet briar, bade me climb
The fence hard by, where that aspiring shrub
Looked out upon the road. . . . . 1814.
. . . . . . He raised his hand,
And to a sweet-briar pointing, bade me climb C.

[4] 1814.
The gooseberry-trees that showed their dwindled fruit
Hanging in long lank slips, or leafless strings
Of currants might have tempted to o'erleap C.

I yet was standing, freely to respire,
And cool my temples in the fanning air,
Thus did he speak. "I see around me here
Things which you cannot see: we die, my Friend,
Nor we alone, but that which each man loved
And prized in his peculiar nook of earth
Dies with him, or is changed; and very soon
Even of the good is no memorial left.*
—The Poets, in their elegies and songs
Lamenting the departed, call the groves,
They call upon the hills and streams to mourn,†
And senseless rocks; nor idly; for they speak,
In these their invocations, with a voice
Obedient to the strong creative power
Of human passion. Sympathies there are
More tranquil, yet perhaps of kindred birth,
That steal upon the meditative mind,
And grow with thought. Beside yon spring I stood,
And eyed its waters till we seemed to feel
One sadness, they and I. For them a bond
Of brotherhood is broken: time has been
When, every day, the touch of human hand
Dislodged the natural sleep that binds them up
In mortal stillness; and they ministered
To human comfort. Stooping down[1] to drink,

---

[1] 1827.
. . . . As I stooped . . 1814.

---

* Compare *Julius Cæsar*, act III. scene ii. l. 81—
The good is oft interred with their bones. Ed.

† See Moschus's epitaph on Bion, 1-7—

Αἴλινά μοι στοναχεῖτε νάπαι καὶ Δώρεον ὕδωρ,
καὶ ποταμοὶ κλαίοιτε τὸν ἱμερόεντα Βίωνα.
νῦν φυτά μοι μύρεσθε, καὶ ἄλσεα νῦν γοάοισθε.
ἄνθεα νῦν στυγνοῖσιν ἀποπνείοιτε κορύμβοις.
νῦν ῥόδα φοινίσσεσθε τὰ πένθιμα, νῦν ἀνεμῶναι,
νῦν ὑάκινθε λάλει τὰ σὰ γράμματα, καὶ πλέον αἶ αἶ
λάμβανε τοῖς πετάλοισι καλὸς τέθνακε μελικτάς.

And compare Virgil, Ecl. v. 27, 28; Georg. I. 466-488; Georg. IV. 461-463; Catullus, Carmen XXXI., *Ad Sirmionem Peninsulam*, the three last lines. See also Theocritus, Idyll 3, and compare the philosophic myths in the stories of Orpheus, Amphion, etc.—Ed.

Upon the slimy foot-stone I espied
The useless fragment of a wooden bowl,
Green with the moss of years, and subject only
To the soft handling of the elements :
There let it lie—how foolish are such thoughts !
Forgive them ;—never—never did my steps
Approach this door but she who dwelt within [1]
A daughter's welcome gave me, and I loved her
As my own child. Oh, Sir ! the good die first,*
And they whose hearts are dry as summer dust
Burn to the socket. Many a passenger
Hath blessed poor Margaret for her gentle looks,
When she upheld the cool refreshment drawn
From that forsaken spring ; and no one came
But he was welcome ; no one went away
But that it seemed she loved him. She is dead,

---

[1] 1836.

Green with the moss of years ; a pensive sight
That moved my heart !—recalling former days
When I could never pass that road but She
Who lived within these walls, at my approach, 1814.

Green with the moss of years, and subject only
To the soft handling of the Elements :
There let the relic lie—fond thought—vain words !
Forgive them—never did my steps approach
This humble door but she who dwelt within 1827.

Forgive them ;—never—never did my steps
Approach this door but she who dwelt within 1832.

Forgive them for the sake of her who dwelt
Within these walls, who here so oft hath giv'n
To me a daughter's greeting ; and I loved her MS.

Green with the moss of years. Upon the simple sight
As there it lay I could not look unmoved !
Forgive the weakness—never did step of mine
Approach this door, but she who dwelt within C.

---

* Compare ὃν οἱ θεοὶ φιλοῦσιν, ἀποθνήσκει νέος.
Whom the gods love, die young.

Menander, quoted (amongst others) by Plutarch, *Consol. ad Apollonium*, cap. 34. For other authorities, see Meineke's *Comicorum Græcorum Fragmenta.*—ED.

The light extinguished of her lonely hut,
The hut itself abandoned to decay,
And she forgotten in the quiet grave.

"I speak," continued he, "of One whose stock
Of virtues bloomed beneath this lowly roof.
She was a Woman of a steady mind,
Tender and deep in her excess of love;
Not speaking much, pleased rather with the joy
Of her own thoughts: by some especial care
Her temper had been framed, as if to make
A Being, who by adding love to peace
Might live on earth a life of happiness.
Her wedded Partner lacked not on his side
The humble worth that satisfied her heart:
Frugal, affectionate, sober, and withal
Keenly industrious. She with pride would tell
That he was often seated at his loom,*
In summer, ere the mower was abroad
Among the dewy grass,—in early spring,
Ere the last star had vanished.—They who passed
At evening, from behind the garden fence
Might hear his busy spade, which he would ply,
After his daily work, until the light
Had failed, and every leaf and flower were lost
In the dark hedges. So their days were spent
In peace and comfort; and a pretty boy
Was their best hope, next to the God in heaven.

"Not twenty years ago, but you I think
Can scarcely bear it now in mind, there came
Two blighting seasons, when the fields were left
With half a harvest. It pleased Heaven to add
A worse affliction in the plague of war:
This happy Land was stricken to the heart!

* The hand-loom was common in many of the cottages of the country, as well as in the manufacturing towns of England and Scotland, until quite recently.—ED.

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A Wanderer then among the cottages,
I, with my freight of winter raiment, saw
The hardships of that season: many rich
Sank down, as in a dream, among the poor;
And of the poor did many cease to be,
And their place knew them not.* Meanwhile, abridged
Of daily comforts, gladly reconciled
To numerous self-denials, Margaret
Went struggling on through those calamitous years
With cheerful hope, until the second autumn,
When her life's Helpmate on a sick-bed lay,[1]
Smitten with perilous fever. In disease
He lingered long; and, when his strength returned,
He found the little he had stored, to meet
The hour of accident or crippling age,
Was all consumed. A second infant now
Was added to the troubles of a time
Laden, for them and all of their degree,
With care and sorrow: shoals of artisans
From ill-requited labour turned adrift
Sought daily bread from public charity,[2]
They, and their wives and children—happier far
Could they have lived as do the little birds
That peck along the hedge-rows, or the kite
That makes her dwelling on the mountain rocks![3]

[1] 1827.
With chearful hope: but ere the second autumn
Her life's true Help-mate on a sick-bed lay, 1814.

[2] 1827.
Was all consumed. Two children had they now,
One newly born. As I have said, it was
A time of trouble; shoals of Artisans
Were from their daily labour turn'd adrift
To seek their bread from public charity, 1814.

[3] 1827.
That peck along the hedges, or the Kite
That makes his dwelling on the mountain Rocks! 1814.

* Psalm ciii. 16.—Ed.

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"A sad reverse it was for him who long
Had filled with plenty, and possessed in peace,
This lonely Cottage. At the door[1] he stood,
And whistled many a snatch of merry tunes
That had no mirth in them;* or with his knife
Carved uncouth figures on the heads of sticks—
Then, not less idly, sought, through every nook
In house or garden, any casual work
Of use or ornament; and with a strange,
Amusing, yet uneasy, novelty,
He mingled,[2] where he might, the various tasks
Of summer, autumn, winter, and of spring.
But this endured not; his good humour soon
Became a weight in which no pleasure was:
And poverty brought on a petted mood
And a sore temper: day by day he drooped,
And he would leave his work—and to the town
Would turn without an errand his slack steps;[3]
Or wander here and there among the fields.
One while he would speak lightly of his babes,
And with a cruel tongue; at other times
He tossed them with a false unnatural joy:
And 'twas a rueful thing to see the looks
Of the poor innocent children. 'Every smile,'
Said Margaret to me, here beneath these trees,
'Made my heart bleed.'"

[1] 1836.
. . . . . . At his door . . 1814.

[2] 1836.
He blended, ... 1814.

[3] 1836.
Without an errand, would direct his steps, 1814.

* Compare λύοντες οὐκ ἤκουον.—(Æsch. *Prom.* v. 447.)
Also S. Matt. xiii. 13-15—
They seeing, see not; and hearing, they hear not.
And Shakespeare, *Richard III.* act IV. scene iv. l. 26—
Blind sight, dead life, poor mortal-living ghost. ED.

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At this the Wanderer paused;
And, looking up to those enormous elms,
He said, "'Tis now the hour of deepest noon.*
At this still season of repose and peace,
This hour when all things which are not at rest
Are cheerful; while this multitude of flies
With tuneful hum is filling all the air;[1]
Why should a tear be on an old Man's cheek?[2]
Why should we thus, with an untoward mind,
And in the weakness of humanity,
From natural wisdom turn our hearts away;
To natural comfort shut our eyes and ears;
And, feeding on disquiet, thus disturb
The calm of nature with our restless thoughts?"

He spake with somewhat of a solemn tone:
But, when he ended, there was in his face
Such easy cheerfulness, a look so mild,†
That for a little time it stole away
All recollection; and that simple tale
Passed from my mind like a forgotten sound.
A while on trivial things we held discourse,
To me soon tasteless. In my own despite,
I thought of that poor Woman as of one
Whom I had known and loved. He had rehearsed
Her homely tale with such familiar power,
With such an active countenance, an eye

---

[1] 1845.
Is filling all the air with melody; 1814.

[2] 1845.
. . . . in an Old Man's eye? 1814.

---

* Compare *The Waggoner*, vol. iii. p. 77—
In silence deeper far than that of deepest noon! ED.

† Compare *Resolution and Independence*, stanza xiii. (vol. ii. p. 319)—
Ere he replied, a flash of mild surprise
Broke from the sable orbs of his yet-vivid eyes. ED.

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So busy, that the things of which he spake
Seemed present; and, attention now relaxed,
A heart-felt chillness crept along my veins.
I rose; and, having left the breezy shade,
Stood drinking comfort from the warmer sun,
That had not cheered me long—ere, looking round [1]
Upon that tranquil Ruin, I returned,
And begged of the old Man that, for my sake,
He would resume his story.
He replied,
"It were a wantonness, and would demand
Severe reproof, if we were men whose hearts
Could hold vain dalliance with the misery
Even of the dead; contented thence to draw
A momentary pleasure, never marked
By reason, barren of all future good.
But we have known that there is often found
In mournful thoughts, and always might be found,
A power to virtue friendly; wer 't not so,
I am a dreamer among men, indeed
An idle dreamer! 'Tis a common tale,
An ordinary sorrow of man's life,
A tale of silent suffering, hardly clothed
In bodily form.—But without further bidding
I will proceed.
"While thus it fared with them,
To whom this cottage, till those hapless years,
Had been a blessed home, it was my chance
To travel in a country far remote;
And [2] when these lofty elms once more appeared

[1] 1827.
There was a heart-felt chillness in my veins.—
I rose; and, turning from the breezy shade,
Went forth into the open air, and stood
To drink the comfort of the warmer sun.
Long time I had not staid, ere, looking round 1814.

[2] 1814.
But . . . . MS.

What pleasant expectations lured me on
O'er the flat Common!—With quick step I reached
The threshold, lifted with light hand the latch;
But, when I entered, Margaret looked at me[1]
A little while; then turned her head away
Speechless,—and, sitting down upon a chair,
Wept bitterly. I wist not what to do,
Nor[2] how to speak to her. Poor Wretch! at last
She rose from off her seat, and then,—O Sir!
I cannot *tell* how she pronounced my name:—
With fervent love, and with a face of grief
Unutterably helpless, and a look
That seemed to cling upon me,[3] she enquired
If I had seen her husband. As she spake
A strange surprise and fear came to my heart,
Nor had I power to answer ere she told
That he had disappeared—not two months gone.
He left his house: two wretched days had past,
And on the third, as wistfully she raised
Her head from off her pillow, to look forth,
Like one in trouble, for returning light,
Within her chamber-casement she espied
A folded paper, lying as if placed

---

[1] 1827.
. . . . . . far remote.
And glad I was, when, halting by yon gate
That leads from the green lane, once more I saw
These lofty elm-trees. Long I did not rest:
With many pleasant thoughts I chear'd my way
O'er the flat Common.—Having reached the door
I knock'd,—and, when I entered with the hope
Of usual greeting, Margaret looked at me 1814.

[2] 1832.
Or . . . . 1814.

[3] 1814.
With fervent love, and with a look of grief
Unutterable, and with a helpless look
That seemed to cling upon me, . . C.

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To meet her waking eyes. This tremblingly
She opened—found no writing, but beheld [1]
Pieces of money carefully enclosed,
Silver and gold. 'I shuddered at the sight,'
Said Margaret, 'for I knew it was his hand
That must have placed it there; and ere that day
Was ended, that long anxious day, I learned,
From one who by my husband had been sent
With the sad news, that he had joined a troop [2]
Of soldiers, going to a distant land.
—He left me thus—he could not gather heart
To take a farewell of me; for he feared
That I should follow with my babes, and sink
Beneath the misery of that wandering life.'

"This tale did Margaret tell with many tears:
And, when she ended, I had little power
To give her comfort, and was glad to take
Such words of hope from her own mouth as served
To cheer us both. But long we had not talked
Ere we built up a pile of better thoughts,
And with a brighter eye she looked around
As if she had been shedding tears of joy.
We parted.—'Twas the time of early spring;
I left her busy with her garden tools;
And well remember, o'er that fence she looked,
And, while I paced along the foot-way path,
Called out, and sent a blessing after me,
With tender cheerfulness, and with a voice
That seemed the very sound of happy thoughts.

---

[1] 1827.
. . . . but therein 1814.

[2] 1836.
Which placed it there: and ere that day was ended,
That long and anxious day! I learned from One
Sent hither by my Husband to impart
The heavy news,—that he had joined a Troop. 1814.

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"I roved o'er many a hill and many a dale,
With my accustomed load; in heat and cold,
Through many a wood and many an open ground,
In sunshine and in shade, in wet and fair,
Drooping or blithe of heart, as might befal;
My best companions now the driving winds,
And now the 'trotting brooks'* and whispering trees,
And now the music of my own sad steps,
With many a short-lived thought that passed between,
And disappeared.
"I journeyed back this way,
When, in the warmth of midsummer, the wheat[1]
Was yellow; and the soft and bladed grass,†
Springing afresh, had o'er the hay-field spread
Its tender verdure. At the door arrived,
I found that she was absent. In the shade,
Where now we sit, I waited her return.
Her cottage, then a cheerful object, wore
Its customary look,—only, it seemed,[2]
The honeysuckle, crowding round the porch,
Hung down in heavier tufts; and that bright weed,
The yellow stone-crop,‡ suffered to take root
Along the window's edge, profusely grew
Blinding the lower panes. I turned aside,
And strolled into her garden. It appeared
To lag behind the season, and had lost
Its pride of neatness. Daisy-flowers and thrift §
Had broken their trim border-lines, and straggled

---

[1] 1827.
Towards the wane of Summer; when the wheat 1814.

[2] 1827.
. . . . . . only, I thought, 1814.

---

* Compare Burns's *Epistle to William Simpson, Ochiltree*—
Adoun some trotting burn's meander. Ed.

† Compare *Midsummer Night's Dream*, act I. scene i. l. 211—
Decking with liquid pearl the bladed grass. Ed.

‡ *Sedum acre*.—Ed.

§ *Statice armerium*.—Ed.

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O'er paths they used to deck :[1] carnations, once
Prized for surpassing beauty, and no less
For the peculiar pains they had required,
Declined their languid heads, wanting support.[2]
The cumbrous bind-weed,* with its wreaths and bells,
Had twined about her two small rows of peas,
And dragged them to the earth.
"Ere this an hour
Was wasted.—Back I turned my restless steps ;
[3] A stranger passed ; and, guessing whom I sought,
He said that she was used to ramble far.—
The sun was sinking in the west ; and now
I sate with sad impatience. From within
Her solitary infant cried aloud ;
Then, like a blast that dies away self-stilled,
The voice was silent. From the bench I rose ;
But neither could divert nor soothe my thoughts.
The spot, though fair, was very desolate—
The longer I remained, more desolate :
And, looking round me, now I first observed
The corner stones, on either side the porch,[4]

---

[1] 1845.
Its pride of neatness. From the border lines
Composed of daisy and resplendent thrift,
Flowers straggling forth had on those paths encroached
Which they were used to deck :— . . . . 1814.

. . . . . . Daisy-flow'rs and thrift
Had broken their trim lines, and straggled o'er
The paths they used to deck :— . . . . 1827.

[2] 1832.
. . . . . . without support. 1814.

[3] And, as I walked before the door, it chanced
This line appeared only in 1814 and 1820.

[4] 1827.
And, looking round, I saw the corner stones,
Till then unnotic'd, on either side the door 1814.

---

* *Convolvulus arvensis.*—ED.

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With dull red stains discoloured, and stuck o'er
With tufts and hairs of wool, as if the sheep,
That fed upon the Common, thither came
Familiarly, and found a couching-place
Even at her threshold. Deeper shadows fell
From these tall elms; the cottage-clock struck eight;—
I turned, and saw her distant a few steps.
Her face was pale and thin—her figure, too,
Was changed. As she unlocked the door, she said,
'It grieves me you have waited here so long,
But, in good truth, I've wandered much of late;
And, sometimes—to my shame I speak—have need
Of my best prayers to bring me back again.'
While on the board she spread our evening meal,
She told me—interrupting not the work
Which gave employment to her listless hands—
That she had parted with her elder child;
To a kind master on a distant farm
Now happily apprenticed.—'I perceive
You look at me, and you have cause; to-day
I have been travelling far; and many days
About the fields I wander, knowing this
Only, that what I seek I cannot find;
And so I waste my time: for I am changed;
And to myself,' said she, 'have done much wrong
And to this helpless infant. I have slept
Weeping, and weeping have I waked;[1] my tears
Have flowed as if my body were not such
As others are; and I could never die.
But I am now in mind and in my heart
More easy; and I hope,' said she, 'that God[2]
Will give me patience to endure the things
Which I behold at home.'

---

[1] 1827.
. . . . . I have waked; . . 1814.

[2] 1832.
. . . . "that heaven 1814.

"It would have grieved
Your very soul to see her. Sir, I feel
The story linger in my heart; I fear
'Tis long and tedious; but my spirit clings
To that poor Woman:—so familiarly
Do I perceive her manner, and her look,
And presence; and so deeply do I feel
Her goodness, that, not seldom, in my walks
A momentary trance comes over me;
And to myself I seem to muse on One
By sorrow laid asleep; or borne away,
A human being destined to awake
To human life, or something very near
To human life, when he shall come again
For whom she suffered. Yes, it would have grieved
Your very soul to see her: evermore
Her eyelids drooped, her eyes downward were cast;[1]
And, when she at her table gave me food,
She did not look at me. Her voice was low,
Her body was subdued. In every act
Pertaining to her house-affairs, appeared
The careless stillness of a thinking mind
Self-occupied; to which all outward things
Are like an idle matter. Still she sighed,
But yet no motion of the breast was seen,
No heaving of the heart. While by the fire
We sate together, sighs came on my ear,
I knew not how, and hardly whence they came.

"Ere my departure, to her care I gave,
For her son's use, some tokens of regard,
Which with a look of welcome she received;
And I exhorted her to place her trust[2]

---

[1] 1845.
. . . . . were downward cast; 1814.

[2] 1827.
. . . . . to have her trust 1814.

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In God's good love, and seek his help by prayer.
I took my staff, and, when I kissed her babe,
The tears stood in her eyes. I left her then
With the best hope and comfort I could give:
She thanked me for my wish;—but for my hope
It seemed[1] she did not thank me.
"I returned,
And took my rounds along this road again
When[2] on its sunny bank the primrose flower
Peeped forth, to give an earnest of the Spring.
I found her sad and drooping: she had learned
No tidings of her husband; if he lived,[3]
She knew not that he lived; if he were dead,
She knew not he was dead. She seemed the same
In person and appearance; but her house
Bespake a sleepy hand of negligence; *
The floor was neither dry nor neat, the hearth
Was comfortless, and her small lot of books,
Which, in the cottage-window, heretofore
Had been piled up against the corner panes
In seemly order, now, with straggling leaves
Lay scattered here and there, open or shut,
As they had chanced to fall. Her infant Babe
Had from its Mother caught the trick of grief,

---

[1] 1836.
Methought . . . . 1814.

[2] 1845.
Ere . . . . 1814.

[3] 1814.
. . sad and drooping. Time had brought
No tidings which might lead her anxious mind
To a source of quiet; if her husband lived, C.

---

* Mr. H. H. Turner suggests that this line would be more naturally written,

Bespake a hand of sleepy negligence.

The change would have been an improvement.—Ed.

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And sighed among its playthings. I withdrew,
And once again entering the garden saw,[1]
More plainly still, that poverty and grief
Were now come nearer to her: weeds defaced
The hardened soil, and knots of withered grass:
No ridges there appeared of clear black mould,
No winter greenness; of her herbs and flowers,
It seemed the better part were gnawed away
Or trampled into earth; a chain of straw,
Which had been twined about the slender stem
Of a young apple-tree, lay at its root;
The bark was nibbled round by truant sheep.
—Margaret stood near, her infant in her arms,
And, noting that my eye was on the tree,
She said, 'I fear it will be dead and gone
Ere Robert come again.' When to the House
We had returned together, she enquired[2]
If I had any hope:—but for her babe
And for her little orphan boy, she said,
She had no wish to live, that she must die
Of sorrow. Yet I saw the idle loom
Still in its place; his sunday garments hung
Upon the self-same nail; his very staff
Stood undisturbed behind the door.

"And when,
In bleak December, I retraced this way,
She told me that her little babe was dead,
And she was left alone. She now, released
From her maternal cares, had taken up

---

[1] 1845.

. . . . Once again
I turned towards the garden gate, and saw, 1814.

[2] 1845.

. . . . . Towards the House
Together we returned; and she enquired 1814.

. . . . . Back to the house
We turned together, silent, till she asked MS.

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The employment common through these wilds, and gained,
By spinning hemp, a pittance for herself;
And for this end had hired a neighbour's boy
To give her needful help. That very time
Most willingly she put her work aside,
And walked with me along the miry road,
Heedless how far; and, in such piteous sort
That any heart had ached to hear her, begged
That, wheresoe'er I went, I still would ask
For him whom she had lost. We parted then—
Our final parting; for from that time forth
Did many seasons pass ere I returned
Into this tract again.
"Nine tedious years;
From their first separation, nine long years,
She lingered in unquiet widowhood;
A Wife and Widow. Needs must it have been
A sore heart-wasting! I have heard, my Friend,
That in yon arbour oftentimes she sate
Alone, through half the vacant sabbath day;
And, if a dog passed by, she still would quit
The shade, and look abroad. On this old bench
For hours she sate; and evermore her eye
Was busy in the distance, shaping things
That made her heart beat quick. You see that path,
Now faint,—the grass has crept o'er its grey line;
There, to and fro, she paced through many a day
Of the warm summer, from a belt of hemp
That girt her waist, spinning the long-drawn thread
With backward steps. Yet ever as there passed
A man whose garments showed the soldier's red,
Or crippled mendicant in sailor's garb,
The little child who sate to turn the wheel
Ceased from his task; and she with faltering voice
Made many a fond enquiry; and when they,
Whose presence gave no comfort, were gone by,
Her heart was still more sad. And by yon gate,
That bars the traveller's road, she often stood,

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And when a stranger horseman came, the latch
Would lift, and in his face look wistfully:
Most happy, if, from aught discovered there
Of tender feeling, she might dare repeat
The same sad question. Meanwhile her poor Hut
Sank to decay; for he was gone, whose hand,
At the first nipping of October frost,
Closed up each chink, and with fresh bands of straw
Chequered the green-grown thatch. And so she lived
Through the long winter, reckless and alone;
Until her house by frost, and thaw, and rain,
Was sapped; and while she slept, the nightly damps
Did chill her breast; and in the stormy day
Her tattered clothes were ruffled by the wind,
Even at the side of her own fire. Yet still
She loved this wretched spot, nor would for worlds
Have parted hence; and still that length of road,
And this rude bench, one torturing hope endeared,
Fast rooted at her heart: and here, my Friend,—
In sickness she remained; and here she died;
Last human tenant of these ruined walls!" *

The old Man ceased: he saw that I was moved;
From that low bench, rising instinctively
I turned aside in weakness, nor had power
To thank him for the tale which he had told.
I stood, and leaning o'er the garden wall
Reviewed that Woman's sufferings; and it seemed
To comfort me while with a brother's love
I blessed her in the impotence of grief.
Then towards the cottage I returned; and traced

* "The scene of the first book of the poem is, I must own, laid in a tract of country not sufficiently near to that which soon comes into view in the second book, to agree with the fact. All that relates to Margaret, and the ruined cottage, etc., was taken from observations made in the south-west of England; and certainly it would require more than seven-league boots to stretch in one morning, from a common in Somersetshire, or Dorsetshire, to the heights of Furness Fells, and the deep valleys they embosom."—I. F.

Compare with the first book of *The Excursion* the first three books of *The Prelude*.—Ed.

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Fondly, though with an interest more mild,[1]
That secret spirit of humanity
Which, 'mid the calm oblivious tendencies
Of nature, 'mid her plants, and weeds, and flowers,
And silent overgrowings, still survived.
The old Man, noting this, resumed, and said,
"My Friend! enough to sorrow you have given,
The purposes of wisdom ask no more:
Nor more would she have craved as due to One
Who, in her worst distress, had ofttimes felt
The unbounded might of prayer; and learned, with soul
Fixed on the Cross, that consolation springs,
From sources deeper far than deepest pain,
For the meek Sufferer.[2] Why then should we read
The forms of things with an unworthy eye?[3]
She sleeps in the calm earth, and peace is here.
I well remember that those very plumes,
Those weeds, and the high spear-grass on that wall,
By mist and silent rain-drops silvered o'er,
As once I passed, into my heart conveyed[4]

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[1] 1836.
At length towards the Cottage I returned
Fondly,—and traced, with interest more mild, 1814.

[2] The lines from "Nor more would she" to "Sufferer" (934-9) were added in 1845.

[3] 1845.
. . . . ask no more;
Be wise and chearful; and no longer read
The forms of things with an unworthy eye. 1814.

. . . . ask no more:
Doubt not that ofttimes in her soul she felt
The unbounded might of prayer—upon her knees
Was taught that heavenly consolation springs
From sources deeper far than deepest pain
For the meek Sufferer. Why then should we read
The forms of things with a dejected eye? C.

[4] 1836.
. . . did to my heart convey 1814.

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So still an image of tranquillity,*
So calm and still, and looked so beautiful
Amid the uneasy thoughts which filled my mind,
That what we feel of sorrow and despair
From ruin and from change, and all the grief
That passing shows[1] of Being leave behind,
Appeared an idle dream, that could maintain,
Nowhere, dominion o'er the enlightened spirit
Whose meditative sympathies repose
Upon the breast of Faith. I turned away,[2]
And walked along my road in happiness."

He ceased. Ere long the sun declining shot
A slant and mellow radiance, which began
To fall upon us, while, beneath the trees,
We sate on that low bench: and now we felt,
Admonished thus, the sweet hour coming on.
A linnet warbled from those lofty elms,
A thrush sang loud; and other melodies,
At distance heard, peopled the milder air.
The old Man rose, and, with a sprightly mien
Of hopeful preparation, grasped his staff;
Together casting then a farewell look
Upon those silent walls, we left the shade;
And, ere the stars were visible, had reached
A village-inn,—our evening resting-place.

---

[1] 1845.
The passing shews . . . . . . 1814.

[2] 1845.
Appeared an idle dream, that could not live
Where meditation was. I turned away 1814.

---

* Compare stanza xi. in the *Ode, Intimations of Immortality* (vol. viii.)—
To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears. Ed.

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Book Second

THE SOLITARY

ARGUMENT

The Author describes his travels with the Wanderer, whose character is further illustrated—Morning scene, and view of a Village Wake—Wanderer's account of a Friend whom he purposes to visit—View, from an eminence, of the Valley which his Friend had chosen for his retreat[1]*—Sound of singing from below—A funeral procession—Descent into the Valley—Observations drawn from the Wanderer at sight of a book accidentally discovered in a recess in the Valley—Meeting with the Wanderer's friend, the Solitary—Wanderer's description of the mode of burial in this mountainous district—Solitary contrasts with this, that of the individual carried a few minutes before from the cottage*[2]*—The cottage entered—Description of the Solitary's apartment—Repast there—View, from the window, of two mountain summits; and the Solitary's description of the companionship they afford him—Account of the departed inmate of the cottage—Description of a grand spectacle upon the mountains, with its effect upon the Solitary's mind—Leave*[3] *the house.*

IN days of yore how fortunately fared
The Minstrel! wandering on from hall to hall,
Baronial court or royal; cheered with gifts
Munificent, and love, and ladies' praise;
Now meeting on his road an armed knight,
Now resting with a pilgrim by the side
Of a clear brook;—beneath an abbey's roof

[1] *—feelings of the Author at the sight of it—*
Inserted from 1814 to 1832.

[2] *—Brief conversation-*
Inserted from 1814 to 1832.

[3] 1836.
Quit 1814.

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One evening sumptuously lodged; the next,
Humbly in a religious hospital;
Or with some merry outlaws of the wood;
Or haply shrouded in a hermit's cell.
Him, sleeping or awake, the robber spared;
He walked—protected from the sword of war
By virtue of that sacred instrument
His harp, suspended at the traveller's side;
His dear companion wheresoe'er he went
Opening from land to land an easy way
By melody, and by the charm of verse.
Yet not the noblest of that honoured Race
Drew happier, loftier, more empassioned, thoughts
From his long journeyings and eventful life,
Than this obscure Itinerant had skill
To gather, ranging through the tamer ground [1]
Of these our unimaginative days;
Both while he trod the earth in humblest guise
Accoutred with his burthen and his staff;
And now, when free to move with lighter pace.

What wonder, then, if I, whose favourite school
Hath been the fields, the roads, and rural lanes,
[2] Looked on this guide with reverential love?
Each with the other pleased, we now pursued
Our journey, under [3] favourable skies.
Turn wheresoe'er we would, he was a light
Unfailing: not a hamlet could we pass,

---

[1] 1827.
Than this obscure Itinerant (an obscure,
But a high-souled and tender-hearted Man)
Had skill to draw from many a ramble, far
And wide protracted, through the tamer ground 1814.

[2] And pathways winding on from farm to farm,
This line appeared only in 1814 and 1820.

[3] 1836.
. . . . . beneath . . . . 1814.

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Rarely a house, that[1] did not yield to him
Remembrances; or from his tongue call forth
Some way-beguiling tale. Nor less regard
Accompanied those strains of apt discourse,
Which nature's various objects might inspire;[2]
And in the silence of his face I read
His overflowing spirit. Birds and beasts,
And the mute fish that glances in the stream,
And harmless reptile coiling in the sun,
And gorgeous insect hovering in the air,
The fowl domestic, and the household dog—
In his capacious mind, he loved them all:
Their rights acknowledging he felt for all.
Oft was occasion given me to perceive
How the calm pleasures of the pasturing herd
To happy contemplation soothed his walk;
[3] How the poor brute's condition, forced to run
Its course of suffering in the public road,
Sad contrast! all too often smote his heart
With unavailing pity. Rich in love
And sweet humanity, he was, himself,
To the degree that he desired, beloved.
Smiles of good-will from faces that he knew
Greeted us all day long;[4] we took our seats
By many a cottage-hearth, where he received
The welcome of an Inmate from afar,[5]

---

[1] 1827.
. . . . which . . . . . 1814.

[2] 1827.
. . . . supply: 1814.

[3] Along the field, and in the shady grove;
This line appeared only in 1814 and 1820.

[4] C. and 1845.
—Greetings and smiles we met with all day long
From faces that he knew; . . . . . 1814.

[5] 1845.
. . . . . . come from far. 1814.

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And I at once forgot, I was a Stranger.[1]
—Nor was he loth to enter ragged huts,
Huts where his charity[2] was blest; his voice
Heard as the voice of an experienced friend.
And, sometimes—where the poor man held dispute
With his own mind, unable to subdue
Impatience through inaptness to perceive
General distress in his particular lot;
Or cherishing resentment, or in vain
Struggling against it; with a soul perplexed,
And finding in herself[3] no steady power
To draw the line of comfort that divides
Calamity, the chastisement of Heaven,
From the injustice of our brother men—
To him appeal was made as to a judge;
Who, with an understanding heart, allayed
The perturbation; listened to the plea;
Resolved the dubious point; and sentence gave
So grounded, so applied, that it was heard
With softened spirit, even when it condemned.

Such intercourse I witnessed, while we roved,
Now as his choice directed, now as mine;
Or both, with equal readiness of will,
Our course submitting to the changeful breeze
Of accident. But when the rising sun
Had three times called us to renew our walk,
My Fellow-traveller, with earnest voice,
As if the thought were but a moment old,
Claimed absolute dominion for the day.[4]

---

[1] This line was added in 1845.

[2] 1827.
Wherein his charity . . . . . . 1814.

[3] 1827.
. . . . itself . . . 1814.

[4] 1832.
My Fellow Traveller said with earnest voice,
As if the thought were but a moment old,

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We started—and he led me toward the hills,[1]
Up through an ample vale, with higher hills
Before us, mountains stern and desolate; *
But, in the majesty of distance, now
Set off, and to our ken appearing fair
Of aspect, with aërial softness clad,
And beautified with morning's purple beams.

The wealthy, the luxurious, by the stress
Of business roused, or pleasure, ere their time,
May roll in chariots, or provoke the hoofs
Of the fleet coursers they bestride, to raise
From earth the dust of morning, slow to rise;
And they, if blest with health and hearts at ease,
Shall lack not their enjoyment:—but how faint
Compared with ours! who, pacing side by side,
Could, with an eye of leisure, look on all
That we beheld; and lend the listening sense
To every grateful sound of earth and air;
Pausing at will—our spirits braced, our thoughts
Pleasant as roses in the thickets blown,
And pure as dew bathing their crimson leaves.

Mount slowly, sun! that we may journey long,

That I must yield myself without reserve
To his disposal. Glad was I of this: 1814.

My Fellow traveller claim'd with earnest voice,
As if the thought were but a moment old,
An absolute dominion for the day. 1827.

[1] 1836.
. . . and he led towards the hills, 1814.

---

* In the Fenwick note Wordsworth says, "In the poem, I suppose that the Pedlar and I ascended from a plain country up the vale of Langdale. and struck off a good way above the chapel to the western side of the vale." They start from Grasmere, cross over to Langdale by Red Bank and High Close, and walk up the lower part of the valley of Great Langdale, past Elter Water and Chapel Stile.—ED.

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By this dark hill protected from thy beams![1]
Such is the summer pilgrim's frequent wish;
But quickly from among our morning thoughts[2]
'Twas chased away: for, toward[3] the western side
Of the broad vale, casting a casual glance,
We saw a throng of people;—wherefore met?
Blithe notes of music, suddenly let loose
On the thrilled ear, and flags uprising, yield[4]
Prompt answer; they proclaim the annual Wake,*
Which the bright season favours.—Tabor and pipe
In purpose join to hasten or[5] reprove
The laggard Rustic; and repay with boons
Of merriment a party-coloured knot,
Already formed upon the village-green.
—Beyond the limits of the shadow cast
By the broad hill,† glistened upon our sight
That gay assemblage. Round them and above,

---

[1] 1827.

Mount slowly, Sun! and may our journey lie
Awhile within the shadow of this hill,
This friendly hill, a shelter from thy beams! 1814.

[2] 1827.

. . . . wish;
And as that wish, with prevalence of thanks
For present good o'er fear of future ill,
Stole in among the morning's blither thoughts, 1814.

[3] 1827.

. . . . tow'rds . . . . 1814.

[4] 1827.

. . . ear, did to the question yield 1814.

[5] 1836.

. . . . . . and . . 1814.

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* At Chapel Stile the villagers of Langdale are seen at their annual Fair. Dorothy Wordsworth thus alludes to one of these rural Fairs in her Grasmere Journal: "Tuesday, September 2nd, 1800.—We walked to the Fair. There seemed very few people and very few stalls, yet I believe there were many cakes and much beer sold. . . . It was a lovely moonlight night. . . . The moonlight shone only upon the village. It did not eclipse the village lights, and the sound of dancing and merriment came along the still air. I walked with Coleridge and Wm. up the lane and by the church, and then lingered with Coleridge in the garden. . ." See also the account of the "village merry-night," in *The Waggoner*, canto ii. ll. 307-443 (vol. iii. p. 89.) —Ed.

† Lingmoor.—Ed.

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Glitter, with dark recesses interposed,
Casement, and cottage-roof, and stems of trees
Half-veiled in vapoury cloud, the silver steam
Of dews fast melting on their leafy boughs
By the strong sunbeams smitten. Like a mast
Of gold, the Maypole shines; as if the rays
Of morning, aided by exhaling dew,
With gladsome influence could re-animate
The faded garlands dangling from its sides.

Said I, "The music and the sprightly scene
Invite us; shall we quit our road, and join
These festive matins?"—He replied, "Not loth
To linger I would here[1] with you partake,
Not one hour merely, but till evening's close,
The simple pastimes of the day and place.
By the fleet Racers, ere the sun be set,
The turf of yon large pasture will be skimmed;
There, too, the lusty Wrestlers shall[2] contend:
But know we not that he, who intermits
The appointed task and duties of the day,
Untunes full oft the pleasures of the day;
Checking the finer spirits that refuse
To flow, when purposes are lightly changed?
A length of journey yet remains untraced:
Let us proceed."[3] Then, pointing with his staff
Raised toward those craggy summits,[4] his intent
He thus imparted:—

[1] C. and 1845.
Here would I linger, and . . . . . 1814.

[2] 1827.
. . . . . . will . . 1814.

[3] 1845.
We must proceed—a length of journey yet
Remains untraced." . . . . . . 1814.
A length of journey yet remains untrod,
Let us proceed." . . . . . . C.

[4] 1832.
Towards those craggy summits, . . . 1814.

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"In a spot that lies
Among yon mountain fastnesses concealed,*
You will receive, before the hour of noon,
Good recompense, I hope, for this day's toil,
From sight of One who lives secluded there,
Lonesome and lost: of whom, and whose past life,
(Not to forestall such knowledge as may be
More faithfully collected from himself)
This brief communication shall suffice.

"Though now sojourning there, he, like myself,
Sprang from a stock of lowly parentage
Among the wilds of Scotland, in a tract
Where many a sheltered and well-tended plant,
Bears, on the humblest ground of social life,
Blossoms of piety and innocence.[1]
Such grateful promises his youth displayed:
And, having shown in study forward zeal,
He to the Ministry was duly called;
And straight, incited by a curious mind
Filled with vague hopes, he undertook the charge[2]
Of Chaplain to a military troop †
Cheered by the Highland bagpipe, as they marched

[1] 1827.
Upon the humblest ground of social life,
Doth at this day, I trust, the blossoms bear
Of piety and simple innocence. 1814.

[2] 1827.
And, as he shewed in study forward zeal,
All helps were sought, all measures strained, that He,
By due scholastic discipline prepared,
Might to the Ministry be called: which done,
Partly through lack of better hopes—and part
Perhaps incited by a curious mind,
In early life he undertook the charge 1814.

* At Blea Tarn, where the Solitary lived.—Ed.

† "Not long after we took up our abode at Grasmere, came to reside there, from what motive I either never knew or have forgotten, a Scotchman, a little past the middle of life, who had for many years been chaplain to a Highland regiment. He was in no respect, as far as I know, an interesting character, though in his appearance there was a good deal that attracted

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In plaided vest,—his fellow-countrymen.
This office filling, yet[1] by native power
And force of native inclination made
An intellectual ruler in the haunts
Of social vanity, he walked the world,
Gay, and affecting graceful gaiety;
Lax, buoyant—less a pastor with his flock
Than a soldier among soldiers—lived and roamed
Where Fortune led:—and Fortune, who oft proves
The careless wanderer's friend, to him made known
A blooming Lady—a conspicuous flower,
Admired for beauty, for her sweetness praised;
Whom he had sensibility to love,
Ambition to attempt, and skill to win.

"For this fair Bride, most rich in gifts of mind,
Nor sparingly endowed with worldly wealth,
His office he relinquished; and retired
From the world's notice to a rural home.
Youth's season yet with him was scarcely past,
And she was in youth's prime. How free their love,
How full their joy! 'Till, pitiable doom![2]
In the short course of one undreaded year,

---

[1] 1827.
. . . . . and, ... 1814.

[2] 1845.
. . . . How full their joy,
How free their love! nor did their love decay;
Nor joy abate, till, pitiable doom! 1814.

. . . . . nor did that love decay, 1827.

How free their love, till all by death was blasted
In one undreaded year, Death swept away
Two lovely . . . . C.

---

attention, as if he had been shattered in fortune, and not happy in mind. Of his quondam position I availed myself to connect with the Wanderer, also a Scotchman, a character suitable to my purpose, the elements of which I drew from several persons with whom I had been connected, and who fell under my observation during frequent residences in London at the beginning of the French Revolution."—I. F.

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Death blasted all. Death suddenly o'erthrew
Two lovely Children—all that they possessed!
The Mother followed:—miserably bare
The one Survivor stood; he wept, he prayed
For his dismissal, day and night, compelled
To hold communion with the grave, and face
With pain the regions of eternity.[1]
An uncomplaining apathy displaced
This anguish; and, indifferent to delight,
To aim and purpose, he consumed his days,
To private interest dead, and public care.
So lived he; so he might have died.

"But now,
To the wide world's astonishment, appeared
A[2] glorious opening, the unlooked-for dawn,
That promised everlasting joy to France!*
Her voice of social transport[3] reached even him!
He broke from his contracted bounds, repaired
To the great City, an emporium then
Of golden expectations, and receiving
Freights every day from a new world of hope.
Thither his popular talents he transferred;
And, from the pulpit, zealously maintained

---

[1] 1845.

. . . . compelled
By pain to turn his thoughts towards the grave,
And face the regions of Eternity. 1814.
. . . . compelled
To commune with the grave soul-sick, and face
With pain . . . . C.

[2] 1827.

The . . . . 1814.

[3] 1827.

. . . . France!
That sudden light had power to pierce the gloom
In which his Spirit, friendless upon earth,
In separation dwelt, and solitude.
The voice of social transport . . . 1814.

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* Compare *The Prelude*, books ix., x., and xi., *passim*.—Ed.

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The cause of Christ and civil liberty,
As one, and moving to one glorious end.
Intoxicating service! I might say
A happy service; for he was sincere
As vanity and fondness for applause,
And new and shapeless wishes, would allow.

"That righteous cause (such power hath freedom) bound,
For one hostility, in friendly league,[1]
Ethereal natures and the worst of slaves;
Was served by rival advocates that came
From regions opposite as heaven and hell.
One courage seemed to animate them all:
And, from the dazzling conquests daily gained
By their united efforts, there arose
A proud and most presumptuous confidence
In the transcendent wisdom of the age,
And her[2] discernment; not alone in rights,
And in the origin and bounds of power
Social and temporal; but in laws divine,
Deduced by reason, or to faith revealed.
An overweening trust was raised; and fear
Cast out, alike of person and of thing.
Plague from this union spread, whose subtle bane
The strongest did not easily escape;
And He, what wonder! took a mortal taint.
How shall I trace the change, how bear to tell
That he broke faith with them[3] whom he had laid
In earth's dark chambers, with a Christian's hope!
An infidel contempt of holy writ

[1] 1827.
That righteous Cause of freedom did, we know,
Combine, for one hostility, as friends, 1814.

[2] 1827.
. its . . . . 1814.

[3] 1827.
. . . . those . . . 1814.

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Stole by degrees upon his mind; and hence
Life, like that Roman Janus, double-faced;
Vilest hypocrisy—the laughing, gay
Hypocrisy, not leagued with fear, but pride.
Smooth words he had to wheedle simple souls;
But, for disciples of the inner school,
Old freedom was old servitude, and they
The wisest whose opinions stooped the least
To known restraints; and who most boldly drew
Hopeful prognostications from a creed,
That,[1] in the light of false philosophy,
Spread like a halo round a misty moon,
Widening its circle as the storms advance.

"His sacred function was at length renounced;
And every day and every place enjoyed
The unshackled layman's natural liberty;
Speech, manners, morals, all without disguise.
I do not wish to wrong him; though the course
Of private life licentiously displayed
Unhallowed actions—planted like a crown
Upon the insolent aspiring brow
Of spurious notions—worn as open signs
Of prejudice subdued—still he[2] retained,
'Mid much[3] abasement, what he had received
From nature, an intense and glowing mind.
Wherefore, when humbled Liberty grew weak,
And mortal sickness on her face appeared,
He coloured objects to his own desire
As with a lover's passion. Yet his moods
Of pain were keen as those of better men,

---

[1] 1827.
Which, ... 1814.

[2] 1836.
. . . . he still . 1814.

[3] 1836.
. such . . . . 1814.

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Nay keener, as his fortitude was less :
And he continued, when worse days were come,
To deal about his sparkling eloquence,
Struggling against the strange reverse with zeal
That showed like happiness. But, in despite
Of all this outside bravery, within,
He neither felt encouragement nor hope :
For moral dignity, and strength of mind,
Were wanting ; and simplicity of life ;
And reverence for himself ; and, last and best,
Confiding thoughts, through[1] love and fear of Him
Before whose sight the troubles of this world
Are vain, as billows in a tossing sea.

"The glory of the times fading away—
The splendour, which had given a festal air
To self-importance, hallowed it, and veiled
From his own sight—this gone, he forfeited[2]
All joy in human nature ; was consumed,
And vexed, and chafed, by levity and scorn,
And fruitless indignation ; galled by pride ;
Made desperate by contempt of men who throve
Before his sight in power or fame, and won,
Without desert, what he desired ; weak men,
Too weak even for his envy or his hate !
Tormented thus, after a wandering course
Of discontent, and inwardly opprest[3]
With malady—in part, I fear, provoked

---

[1] 1827.
. . . . and . . . . . 1814.

[2] 1827.
. . . . this gone, therewith he lost 1814.

[3] 1827.
. . . . hate !
—And thus beset, and finding in himself
Nor pleasure nor tranquillity, at last,
After a wandering course of discontent
In foreign Lands, and inwardly oppressed 1814.

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By weariness of life—he fixed his home,
Or, rather say, sate down by very chance,
Among these rugged hills; where now he dwells,
And wastes the sad remainder of his hours,
Steeped in a self-indulging spleen, that wants not[1]
Its own voluptuousness;—on this resolved,
With this content, that he will live and die
Forgotten,—at safe distance from 'a world
Not moving to his mind.'" *
These serious words
Closed the preparatory notices
That served my Fellow-traveller to beguile[2]
The way, while we advanced up that wide vale.†
Diverging now (as if his quest had been[3]
Some secret of the mountains, cavern, fall
Of water, or some lofty eminence,[4]
Renowned for splendid prospect far and wide)
We scaled, without a track to ease our steps,
A steep ascent; ‡ and reached a dreary plain,[5] §

---

[1] 1845.
In self-indulging spleen, that doth not want 1814.

[2] 1827.
With which my Fellow-traveller had beguiled 1814.

[3] 1827.
Now, suddenly diverging, he began
To climb upon its western side a Ridge
Pathless and smooth, a long and steep ascent;
As if the object of his quest had been 1814.

[4] 1845.
Of water—or some boastful Eminence, 1814.

[5] 1827.
We clomb without a track to guide our steps;
And, on the summit, reached a heathy plain, 1814.
A steep ascent, and reached at length a dreary plain, MS.

---

* I have not been able to trace this quotation.
Moving about in worlds not realised
occurs in the *Ode, Intimations of Immortality*.—Ed.

† Langdale.—Ed. ‡ The flank of Lingmoor.—Ed.

§ The flat heathery summit of Lingmoor. Note the text of 1814.—Ed.

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With a tumultuous waste of huge hill tops
Before us ;* savage region ! which I paced
Dispirited :[1] when, all at once, behold !
Beneath our feet, a little lowly vale, †
A lowly vale, and yet uplifted high
Among the mountains ; even as if the spot
Had been from eldest time by wish of theirs
So placed, to be shut out from all the world !
Urn-like it was in shape, deep as an urn ; †
With rocks encompassed, save that to the south
Was one small opening, ‡ where a heath-clad ridge
Supplied a boundary less abrupt and close ;
A quiet treeless nook, with two green fields, §
A liquid pool that glittered in the sun, ||
And one bare dwelling ; one abode, no more ! ¶
It seemed the home of poverty and toil,
Though not of want : the little fields, made green
By husbandry of many thrifty years,

---

[1] 1827.

. . . . . region ! and I walked
In weariness : . . . . . . 1814.

---

* Bowfell, Great End, Shelter Crags, and Pike o' Blisco to the west straight before them, the Langdale Pikes to the north on the right, with Wrynose, Wetherlam, and the Coniston Mountains to the south-west.—Ed.

† The head of Little Langdale, with Blea Tarn in the centre, as seen from the top of Lingmoor, the only point, except the summit of Blake Rigg, from which it appears "urn-like."

With the six previous lines compare Beattie's *Minstrel*, book ii. stanza vi.—

It was his chance to wander far abroad,
And o'er a lonely eminence to climb,
Which, heretofore, his foot had never trode ;
A vale appeared below, a deep retired abode. Ed.

‡ The "small opening, where a heath-clad ridge supplied a boundary," is that which leads down into Little Langdale by Fell Foot and Busk.—Ed.

§ The "nook" is not now "treeless," but the fir-wood on the western side of the Vale adds to its "quiet," and deepens the sense of seclusion. —Ed.

|| Blea Tarn. "The scene in which this small piece of water lies, suggested to the Author the following description (given in his poem of *The Excursion*), supposing the spectator to look down upon it, not from the road, but from one of its elevated sides." (See Wordsworth's *Description of the Scenery of the District of the Lakes* in his *Prose Works*.)—Ed.

¶ The solitary cottage, called Blea Tarn house, which is passed on the left of the road under Side Pike.—Ed.

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Paid cheerful tribute to the moorland house.
—There crows the cock, single in his domain:
The small birds find in spring no thicket there
To shroud them; only from the neighbouring vales
The cuckoo, straggling up to the hill tops,
Shouteth faint tidings of some gladder place.

Ah! what a sweet Recess, thought I, is here!
Instantly throwing down my limbs at ease
Upon a bed of heath;—full many a spot
Of hidden beauty have I chanced to espy
Among the mountains; never one like this;
So lonesome, and so perfectly secure;
Not melancholy—no, for it is green,
And bright, and fertile, furnished in itself
With the few needful things that[1] life requires.
—In rugged arms how softly does it lie,[2]
How tenderly protected! Far and near
We have an image of the pristine earth,
The planet in its nakedness: were this
Man's only dwelling, sole appointed seat,
First, last, and single, in the breathing world,
It could not be more quiet: peace is here
Or nowhere; days unruffled by the gale
Of public news or private; years that pass
Forgetfully; uncalled upon to pay
The common penalties of mortal life,
Sickness, or accident, or grief, or pain.

On these and kindred thoughts intent I lay
In silence musing by my Comrade's side,[3]

[1] 1827.
. . . . . . which . . 1814.

[2] 1836.
. . . . . . soft it seems to lie, 1814.

[3] 1827.
On these and other kindred thoughts intent,
In silence by my Comrade's side I lay, 1814.

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He also silent; when from out the heart
Of that profound abyss a solemn voice,
Or several voices in one solemn sound,
Was heard ascending; mournful, deep, and slow
The cadence, as of psalms—a funeral dirge! *
We listened, looking down upon the hut,[1]
But seeing no one: meanwhile from below
The strain continued, spiritual as before;
And now distinctly could I recognise
These words:—'*Shall in the grave thy love be known,*
In death thy faithfulness?'—"God rest his soul!"[2]
Said the old man,[3] abruptly breaking silence,—
"He is departed, and finds peace at last!"

---

[1] 1827.
. . . . . . towards the Hut, 1814.

[2] 1814.
. . . . . . These words,
Said my companion, sighing as he spoke,
Were chosen by himself, God rest his soul. C.

[3] 1845.
The Wanderer cried, ... 1814.

---

* The following is from Dorothy Wordsworth's Grasmere Journal: Wednesday, 3rd September 1800.—"I went to a funeral at John Dawson's. About 10 men and 4 women. . . . The dead person 56 years of age, buried by the parish. . . . They set the corpse down at the door; and, while we stood within the threshold, the men, with their hats off, sang, with decent and solemn countenances, a verse of a funeral psalm. The corpse was then borne down the hill, and they sang till they had passed the Town-end. I was affected to tears while we stood in the house. . . . There were no near kindred, no children. When we got out of the dark house the sun was shining, and the prospect looked as divinely beautiful as I ever saw it. It seemed more sacred than I had ever seen it, and yet more allied to human life. . . . When we came to the bridge, they began to sing again, and stopped during four lines before they entered the churchyard." Compare this with such phrases in *The Excursion* as—

They shaped their course along the sloping side
Of that small valley, singing as they moved;
A sober company and few, the men
Bare-headed, —(p. 84.)

We heard the hymn they sang—a solemn sound
Heard any where; but in a place like this
'Tis more than human! —(p. 90.)—Ed.

This scarcely spoken, and those holy strains
Not ceasing, forth appeared in view a band
Of rustic persons, from behind the hut
Bearing a coffin in the midst, with which
They shaped their course along the sloping side
Of that small valley, singing as they moved; *
A sober company and few, the men
Bare-headed, and all decently attired!
Some steps when they had thus advanced, the dirge
Ended; and, from the stillness that ensued
Recovering, to my Friend I said, "You spake,
Methought, with apprehension that these rites
Are paid to Him upon whose shy retreat
This day we purposed to intrude."—"I did so,
But let us hence, that we may learn the truth:
Perhaps it is not he [1] but some one else
For whom this pious service is performed;
Some other tenant of the solitude."

So, to a steep and difficult descent
Trusting ourselves, we wound from crag to crag,
Where passage could be won; † and, as the last
Of the mute train, behind [2] the heathy top
Of that off-sloping outlet, ‡ disappeared,
I, more impatient in my downward course,[3]
Had landed upon easy ground; and there
Stood waiting for my Comrade. When behold
An object that enticed my steps aside!

---

[1] 1814.
He is it not perhaps . . . . . . C.

[2] 1836.
. . . . . upon . . . . 1814.

[3] 1827.
. . . . . in the course I took, 1814.

---

* See the note on the preceding page.—Ed.
† Descending from the top of Lingmoor to Blea Tarn.—Ed.
‡ The upper part of Little Langdale, descending to Fell Foot.—Ed.

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A narrow, winding, entry opened out [1]
Into a platform—that lay, sheepfold-wise,
Enclosed between an upright [2] mass of rock
And one old moss-grown wall;—a cool recess,
And fanciful! For where the rock and wall
Met in an angle, hung a penthouse, framed
By thrusting two rude staves into the wall [3]
And overlaying them with mountain sods;
To weather-fend a little turf-built seat
Whereon a full-grown man might rest, nor dread
The burning sunshine, or a transient shower;
But the whole plainly wrought by children's hands! *
Whose skill had thronged the floor with a proud show [4]
Of baby-houses, curiously arranged;
Nor wanting ornament of walks between,
With mimic trees inserted in the turf,
And gardens interposed. Pleased with the sight,
I could not choose but beckon to my Guide,
Who, entering, round him threw a careless glance,
Impatient to pass on, when I exclaimed, [5]

---

[1] 1827.
. . . . aside!
It was an Entry, narrow as a door;
A passage whose brief windings opened out 1814.

[2] 1827.
. . . . a single . . . . 1814.

[3] 1827.
Met in an angle, hung a tiny roof,
Or penthouse, which most quaintly had been framed
By thrusting two rude sticks into the wall 1814.

[4] 1827.
Whose simple skill had thronged the grassy floor
With work of frame less solid, a proud show 1814.

[5] 1827.
Who, having entered, carelessly looked round,
And now would have passed on; when I exclaimed, 814.

---

* A spot exactly similar to this can easily be found, about two hundred yards above the house, in the narrow gorge of Blea Tarn Ghyll, below a waterfall, where a "moss-grown wall" still approaches the rock on the other side of the stream, and where a "penthouse" might easily be made by children.—Ed.

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"Lo! what is here?" and, stooping down, drew forth
A book, that, in the midst of stones and moss
And wreck of party-coloured earthen-ware,*
Aptly disposed, had lent its help to raise
One of those petty structures. "His it must be!"
Exclaimed the Wanderer, "cannot but be his,[1]
And he is gone!"[2] The book, which in my hand
Had opened of itself (for it was swoln
With searching damp, and seemingly had lain
To the injurious elements exposed
From week to week,) I found to be a work
In the French tongue, a Novel of Voltaire,
His famous Optimist. "Unhappy Man!"
Exclaimed my Friend: "here then has been to him
Retreat within retreat, a sheltering-place
Within how deep a shelter! He had fits,
Even to the last, of genuine tenderness,
And loved the haunts of children: here, no doubt,
Pleasing and pleased, he shared their simple sports,
Or sate companionless; and here the book,
Left and forgotten in his careless way,
Must by the cottage-children have been found:[3]

---

[1] 1845.
. . . . . "Gracious Heaven!"
The Wanderer cried, "it cannot but be his, 1814.

[2] 1814.
"It cannot," said the Wanderer, "but be his,
And he is gone!" . . . . . . C.

[3] 1827.
. . . . here no doubt
He sometimes played with them; and here hath sate
Far oftener by himself. This Book, I guess,
Hath been forgotten in his careless way;
Left here when he was occupied in mind;
And by the Cottage Children has been found. 1814.

---

* It may not be too trivial to note that, to this day, in the Cumberland and Westmoreland vales, one of the favourite games of children on the fell-sides near their cottages, is playing at mimic gardens and parterres, made out of fragments of broken pottery.—Ed.

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Heaven bless them, and their inconsiderate work!
To what odd purpose have the darlings turned
This sad memorial of their hapless friend!"

"Me," said I, "most doth it surprise, to find
Such book in such a place!"—"A book it is,"
He answered, "to the Person suited well,
Though little suited to surrounding things:
'Tis strange, I grant; and stranger still had been
To see the Man who owned it, dwelling here,[1]
With one poor shepherd, far from all the world!—
Now, if our errand hath been thrown away,
As from these intimations I forebode,
Grieved shall I be—less for my sake than yours,
And least of all for him who is no more."

By this, the book was in the old Man's hand;
And he continued, glancing on the leaves
An eye of scorn:—"The lover," said he, "doomed
To love when hope hath failed him—whom no depth
Of privacy is deep enough to hide,
Hath yet his bracelet or his lock of hair,
And that is joy to him. When change of times
Hath summoned kings to scaffolds, do but give
The faithful servant, who must hide his head
Henceforth in whatsoever nook he may,
A kerchief sprinkled with his master's blood,
And he too hath his comforter. How poor,
Beyond all poverty how destitute,
Must that Man have been left, who, hither driven,
Flying or seeking, could yet bring with him
No dearer relique, and no better stay,

---

[1] 1827.

. . . . things;
Nor, with the knowledge which my mind possessed,
Could I behold it undisturbed: 'tis strange,
I grant, and stranger still had been to see
The Man, who was its Owner, dwelling here, 1814.

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Than this dull product of a scoffer's pen,*
Impure conceits discharging from a heart
Hardened by impious pride!—I did not fear
To tax you with this journey;"—mildly said
My venerable Friend, as forth we stepped
Into the presence of the cheerful light—
"For I have knowledge that you do not shrink
From moving spectacles;—but let us on."

So speaking, on he went, and at the word
I followed, till he made a sudden stand:
For full in view, approaching through a [1] gate
That opened from the enclosure of green fields
Into the rough uncultivated ground,†
Behold the Man whom he had fancied dead!
I knew from his deportment, mien, and dress,[2]
That it could be no other; a pale face,
A meagre person, tall, and in a garb [3]
Not rustic—dull and faded like himself!
He saw us not, though distant but few steps;
For he was busy, dealing, from a store
Upon a broad leaf carried, choicest strings
Of red ripe currants; [4] gift by which he strove,
With intermixture of endearing words,

---

[1] 1827.
. . . . the . 1814.

[2] 1827.
I knew, from the appearance and the dress, 1814.

[3] 1845.
A tall and meagre person, in a garb 1814.

[4] 1827.
Which on a leaf he carried in his hand,
Strings of ripe currants; . . . . . 1814.

---

* Compare Lamb's remark in a letter to Wordsworth, 14th August 1814. See *Letters of Charles Lamb*, edited by Canon Ainger, vol. i. p. 271.—Ed.

† The flat ground on the more level part of the valley near Blea Tarn cottage.—Ed.

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To soothe a Child, who walked beside him, weeping
As if disconsolate.—"They to the grave
Are bearing him, my Little-one," he said,
"To the dark pit; but he will feel no pain;
His body is at rest, his soul in heaven."

More might have followed—but my honoured Friend
Broke in upon the Speaker with a frank
And cordial greeting.—Vivid was the light
That flashed and sparkled from the other's eyes;[1] *
He was all fire: no shadow on his brow
Remained, nor sign of sickness on his face.[2]
Hands joined he with his Visitant,—a grasp,
An eager grasp; and many moments' space—
When the first glow of pleasure was no more,
And, of the sad appearance which at once
Had vanished, much was come and coming back—[3]
An amicable smile retained the life
Which it had unexpectedly received,
Upon his hollow cheek. "How kind," he said,
"Nor could your coming have been better timed;
For this, you see, is in our narrow[4] world

---

[1] 1827.
Glad was my Comrade now, though he at first,
I doubt not, had been more surprized than glad.
But now, recovered from the shock and calm,
He soberly advanced; and to the Man
Gave chearful greeting.—Vivid was the light
Which flashed at this from out the Other's eyes; 1814.

[2] 1845.
He was all fire: the sickness from his face
Passed like a fancy that is swept away; 1814.

[3] 1840.
. . . . more,
And much of what had vanished was returned, 1814.

[4] 1827.
. . . . . . little . 1814.

---

* Compare *Resolution and Independence*, stanza xiii. (see vol. ii. p. 319).—ED.

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A day of sorrow. I have here a charge"—
And, speaking thus, he patted tenderly
The sun-burnt forehead of the weeping child—
"A little mourner, whom it is my task
To comfort;—but how came ye?—if yon track
(Which doth at once befriend us and betray)
Conducted hither your most welcome feet,
Ye could not miss the funeral train—they yet
Have scarcely disappeared." "This blooming Child,"
Said the old Man, "is of an age to weep
At any grave or solemn spectacle,
Inly distressed or overpowered with awe,
He knows not wherefore;—but the boy to-day,
Perhaps is shedding orphan's tears; you also[1]
Must have sustained a loss."—"The hand of Death,"
He answered, "has been here; but could not well
Have fallen more lightly, if it had not fallen
Upon myself."—The other left these words
Unnoticed, thus continuing—
"From yon crag,
Down whose steep sides we dropped into the vale,
We heard the hymn they sang—a solemn sound
Heard any where; but in a place like this
'Tis more than human! Many precious rites
And customs of our rural ancestry
Are gone, or stealing from us; this, I hope,
Will last for ever.* Oft on my way have I
Stood still, though but a casual passenger,
So much I felt the awfulness of life,[2]

---

[1] 1845.
He knows not why;—but he, perchance, this day,
Is shedding Orphan's tears; and you yourself 1814.

[2] 1836.
. . . . . Often have I stopped
When on my way, I could not chuse but stop,
So much I felt the awfulness of Life, 1814.

---

* Compare the note p. 83; also the Fenwick note, in which Wordsworth laments the change in the "manner in which, till lately, every one was borne to the place of sepulture."—Ed.

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In that one moment when the corse is lifted
In silence, with a hush of decency;
Then from the threshold moves with song of peace,
And confidential yearnings, tow'rds its home,
Its final home on earth.[1] What traveller—who—
(How far soe'er a stranger) does not own
The bond of brotherhood, when he sees them go,
A mute procession on the houseless road;
Or passing by some single tenement
Or clustered dwellings, where again they raise
The monitory voice? But most of all
It touches, it confirms, and elevates,
Then, when the body, soon to be consigned
Ashes to ashes, dust bequeathed to dust,
Is raised from the church-aisle, and forward borne
Upon the shoulders of the next in love,
The nearest in affection or in blood;
Yea, by the very mourners who had knelt
Beside the coffin, resting on its lid
In silent grief their unuplifted heads,*
And heard meanwhile the Psalmist's mournful plaint,
And that most awful scripture which declares
We shall not sleep, but we shall all be changed!
—Have I not seen—ye likewise may have seen—
Son, husband, brothers—brothers side by side,

. . . . . Often have I stopped,
So much I felt the awfulness of life, 1827.

The text of 1832 returns to that of 1814.

[1] 1845.

. . . . to its home,
Its final home in earth. . . . . . 1814.

. . . . to its home,
Its final home on earth. . . . . . 1836.

* The custom of mourners kneeling round the coffin was, till quite lately, in common use. It is still observed in some churches in Cumberland and Westmoreland, but is gradually passing away.—ED.

And son and father also side by side,
Rise from that posture:—and in concert move,
On the green turf following the vested Priest,
Four dear supporters of one senseless weight,
From which they do not shrink, and under which
They faint not, but advance towards the open grave[1]
Step after step—together, with their firm
Unhidden faces: he that suffers most,
He outwardly, and inwardly perhaps,
The most serene, with most undaunted eye!—
Oh! blest are they who live and die like these,
Loved with such love, and with such sorrow mourned!"

"That poor Man taken hence to-day," replied
The Solitary, with a faint sarcastic smile
Which did not please me, "must be deemed, I fear,
Of the unblest; for he will surely sink
Into his mother earth without such pomp
Of grief, depart without occasion given
By him for such array of fortitude.
Full seventy winters hath he lived, and mark!
This simple Child will mourn his one short hour,
And I shall miss him; scanty tribute! yet,
This wanting, he would leave the sight of men,
If love were his sole claim upon their care,
Like a ripe date which in the desert falls
Without a hand to gather it."
At this
I interposed, though loth to speak, and said,
"Can it be thus among so small a band
As ye must needs be here? in such a place
I would not willingly, methinks, lose sight
Of a departing cloud."—"'Twas not for love"
Answered the sick Man with a careless voice—
"That I came hither; neither have I found

[1] 1836.
. . . . . . towards the grave 1814.

Among associates who have power of speech,
Nor in such other converse as is here,
Temptation so prevailing as to change
That mood, or undermine my first resolve."
Then, speaking in like careless sort, he said
To my benign Companion,—" Pity 'tis
That fortune did not guide you to this house
A few days earlier; then would you have seen
What stuff the Dwellers in a solitude,
That seems by Nature hollowed out to be
The seat and bosom of pure innocence,[1]
Are made of, an ungracious matter this!
Which, for truth's sake, yet in remembrance too
Of past discussions with this zealous friend
And advocate of humble life, I now
Will force upon his notice; undeterred
By the example of his own pure course,
And that respect and deference which a soul
May fairly claim, by niggard age enriched
In what she most doth value, love of God[2]
And his frail creature Man;—but ye shall hear.
I talk—and ye are standing in the sun
Without refreshment!"
Quickly had he spoken,
And, with light steps still quicker than his words,
Led toward the Cottage. Homely was the spot;[3]

---

[1] 1827.
. . . . . . in this Solitude,
(That seems by Nature framed to be the seat
And very bosom of pure innocence) 1814.

[2] 1845.
In what it values most—the love of God 1814.
In what she values most—the love of God 1827.
And more as years are multiplied
With what she most delights in, love of God C.

[3] 1836.
Saying this he led
Towards the Cottage;—homely was the spot; 1814.

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And, to my feeling, ere we reached the door,
Had almost a forbidding nakedness;
Less fair, I grant, even painfully less fair,
Than it appeared when from the beetling rock[1]
We had looked down upon it. All within,
As left by the[2] departed company,
Was silent; save the solitary clock
That on mine ear ticked with a mournful sound.—[3]
Following our Guide, we clomb the cottage-stairs
And reached a small apartment dark and low,
Which was no sooner entered than our Host
Said gaily, "This is my domain, my cell,
My hermitage, my cabin, what you will—
I love it better than a snail his house.
But now ye shall be feasted with our best." *

So, with more ardour than an unripe girl
Left one day mistress of her mother's stores,
He went about his hospitable task.

---

[1] 1827.
. . . . . . Valley's brink 1814.

[2] 1827.
. . . that . . . . . . 1814.

[3] 1845.
Was silent; and the solitary clock
Ticked, as I thought, with melancholy sound.— 1814.

---

* Blea Tarn house is a humble cottage, resembling Anne Tyson's house at Hawkshead where Wordsworth lived when at school. On the ground-floor are a parlour, kitchen, and dairy. You ascend by nine stone steps to the upper flat, where there are four small rooms, and the window of one of them faces the north in the direction of the Langdale Pikes. The foundations of an older house may be seen a little lower down, about twenty yards nearer the tarn; but the present house was probably standing at the beginning of this century. As there are two poplars to the north of the cottage, and a sycamore near them, it is not likely that the place was *entirely* "treeless" in Wordsworth's time. In the Fenwick memoranda he says "the cottage was called Hackett, and stands, as described, on the southern extremity of the ridge which separates the two Langdales." In this he evidently confounds Hackett cottage, near Colwith—which separates the two Langdales as you ascend them from the lower country—with the Blea Tarn cottage, which stands on "the southern extremity of the ridge which separates the Langdale" valleys as you descend them.—Ed.

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My eyes were busy, and my thoughts no less,
And pleased I looked upon my grey-haired Friend,
As if to thank him; he returned that look,
Cheered, plainly, and yet serious. What a wreck
Had we about us![1] scattered was the floor,
And, in like sort, chair, window-seat, and shelf,
With books, maps, fossils, withered plants and flowers,
And tufts of mountain moss. Mechanic tools
Lay intermixed with scraps of paper, some[2]
Scribbled with verse: a broken angling-rod
And shattered telescope, together linked
By cobwebs, stood within a dusty nook;
And instruments of music, some half-made,
Some in disgrace, hung dangling from the walls.
But speedily the promise was fulfilled;
A feast before us, and a[3] courteous Host
Inviting us in glee to sit and eat.
A napkin, white as foam of that rough brook
By which it had been bleached, o'erspread the board;
And was itself half-covered with a store[4]
Of dainties,—oaten bread, curd,[5] cheese, and cream;
And cakes of butter curiously embossed,
Butter that had imbibed from meadow-flowers
A golden hue, delicate as their own
Faintly reflected in a lingering stream.[6]

---

[1] 1845.
We had around us! . . . . . . 1814.
Had we around us! . . . . . . 1827.

[2] 1827.
. . . . . moss; and here and there
Lay, intermixed with these, mechanic tools,
And scraps of paper,—some I could perceive 1814.

[3] . . . . . . the . . . MS.

[4] 1845.
. . . . load 1814.

[5] 1827.
. . . . curds, . . . 1814.

[6] 1832.
Butter that had imbibed a golden tinge,

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Nor lacked, for more delight on that warm day,
Our table small parade of garden fruits,
And whortle-berries from the mountain side.
The Child, who long ere this had stilled his sobs,
Was now[1] a help to his late comforter,
And moved, a willing Page, as he was bid,
Ministering to our need.
In genial mood,
While at our pastoral banquet thus we sate
Fronting the window of that little cell,
I could not, ever and anon, forbear
To glance an upward look on two huge Peaks,
That from some other vale peered into this.*
"Those lusty twins," exclaimed our host, "if here
It were your lot to dwell, would soon become[2]

A hue like that of yellow meadow flowers
Reflected faintly in a silent pool. 1814.

From meadow flowers, hue delicate as theirs
Faintly reflected in a lingering stream; 1827.

1 Became . . . . MS.

2 1827.
"Those lusty Twins on which your eyes are cast,"
Exclaimed our Host, "if here you dwelt, would be 1814.

* It is generally supposed that the
two huge Peaks,
That from some other vale peered into this,
are the Langdale Pikes; and it is the most likely supposition. But, if the three were seated, as described, in the upper room of the cottage (which has one small window looking toward the Pikes), they could not possibly see them. Side Pike and Pike o' Blisco alone could be seen. Either then, these are the Peaks referred to; or, what is much more likely, the realism of the narrative here gives way; and the far finer pikes of Langdale are introduced —although they are not visible from the house—because they belong to the district, and can be seen from so many points around. The phrases "from some other vale" and "lusty twins" point unmistakably to those two characteristic pikes which "peer" over the crest of the ridge dividing the Langdale valleys. "Let a man," says Dr. Cradock, "as he approaches Blea Tarn from Little Langdale, see these slowly rising, and peering alone over the depression (or Haws) which divides the Langdales, and he cannot doubt that they are the 'lusty twins.' Let the Haws be in shadow, and the Pikes in sunlight, or the reverse, and the effect is one of the most striking in all the district." Compare the sonnet, *November 1, 1815*, beginning—
How clear, how keen, how marvellously bright. ED.

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The Solitary is content —

Your prized companions.—Many are the notes
Which, in his tuneful course, the wind draws forth
From rocks, woods, caverns, heaths, and dashing shores;
And well those lofty brethren bear their part
In the wild concert—chiefly when the storm
Rides high; then all the upper air they fill
With roaring sound, that ceases not to flow,
Like smoke, along the level of the blast,
In mighty current; theirs, too, is the song
Of stream and headlong flood that seldom fails;
And, in the grim and breathless hour of noon,
Methinks that I have heard them echo back
The thunder's greeting. Nor have nature's laws
Left them ungifted with a power to yield
Music of finer tone;[1] a harmony,
So do I call it, though it be the hand
Of silence, though there be no voice;—the clouds,
The mist, the shadows, light of golden suns,
Motions of moonlight, all come thither—touch,
And have an answer—thither come, and shape
A language not unwelcome to sick hearts
And idle spirits:—there the sun himself,
At the calm close of summer's longest day,*
Rests his substantial orb;—between those heights
And on the top of either pinnacle,
More keenly than elsewhere in night's blue vault,
Sparkle the stars, as of their station proud.
Thoughts are not busier in the mind of man
Than the mute agents stirring there:—alone
Here do I sit and watch."—†

[1] 1827.
. . . . frame; . . . . 1814.

* This is strictly accurate. On and about the 21st June, the sun, as seen from Blea Tarn, sets just between the Langdale Pikes.—Ed.

† "Mark how the wind rejoices in these peaks, and they give back its wild pleasure; how all the things which touch and haunt them get their reply; how they are loved and love; how busy are the mute agents there; how proud the stars to shine on them." (Stopford A. Brooke's *Theology in the English Poets*, p. 108.)—Ed.

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A fall of voice,
Regretted like the nightingale's last note,
Had scarcely closed this high-wrought strain of rapture
Ere with inviting smile the Wanderer said:[1]
"Now for the tale with which you threatened us!"
"In truth the threat escaped me unawares:
Should the tale tire you, let this challenge stand
For my excuse. Dissevered from mankind,
As to your eyes and thoughts we must have seemed[2]
When ye looked down upon us from the crag,
Islanders mid[3] a stormy mountain sea,
We are not so;—perpetually we touch
Upon the vulgar ordinances[4] of the world;
And he, whom this our cottage hath to-day
Relinquished, lived[5] dependent for his bread
Upon the laws of public charity.
The Housewife, tempted by such slender gains
As might from that occasion be distilled,
Opened, as she before had done for me,

---

[1] 1845.

With brightening face
The Wanderer heard him speaking thus, and said, 1814.

A fall of voice,
Regretted like the Nightingale's last note,
Had scarcely closed this high-wrought Rhapsody, 1827.

Had scarcely closed this strain of thankful rapture, C.

Ere with inviting voice . . . . . MS.

[2] 1827.

. . . . . . unawares
And was forgotten. Let this challenge stand
For my excuse, if what I shall relate
Tire your attention.—Outcast and cut off
As we seem here, and must have seemed to you 1814.

[3] 1845.

. . of . . . . . . 1814.

[4] 1836.

. . . . ordinance . . . 1814.

[5] 1827.

. . . . was . . . . 1814.

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Her doors to admit this homeless Pensioner;
The portion gave of coarse but wholesome fare
Which appetite required—a blind dull nook,
Such as she had, the *kennel* of his rest!
This, in itself not ill, would yet have been
Ill borne in earlier life; but his was now
The still contentedness of seventy years.
Calm did he sit under[1] the wide-spread tree
Of his old age: and yet less calm and meek,
Winningly meek or venerably calm,
Than slow and torpid; paying in this wise
A penalty, if penalty it were,
For spendthrift feats, excesses of his prime.
I loved the old Man, for I pitied him!
A task it was, I own, to hold discourse
With one so slow in gathering up his thoughts,
But he was a cheap pleasure to my eyes;
Mild, inoffensive, ready in *his* way,
And helpful[2] to his utmost power: and there
Our housewife knew full well what she possessed
He was her vassal of all labour, tilled
Her garden, from the pasture fetched her kine;
And, one among the orderly array
Of hay-makers, beneath the burning sun
Maintained his place; or heedfully pursued
His course, on errands bound, to other vales,
Leading sometimes an inexperienced child
Too young for any profitable task.
So moved he like a shadow that performed
Substantial service.* Mark me now, and learn

[1] 1836.
. . . . beneath . . . 1814.

[2] 1827.
useful . . . . . . 1814.

* "The account given by the Solitary, towards the close of the second book, in all that belongs to the character of the old man, was taken from a Grasmere pauper, who was boarded in the last house quitting the vale on the road to Ambleside."—I. F.

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For what reward!—The moon her monthly round
Hath not completed since our dame, the queen
Of this one cottage and this lonely dale,
Into my little sanctuary rushed—
Voice to a rueful treble humanised,
And features in deplorable dismay.
I treat the matter lightly, but, alas!
It is most serious: persevering rain[1]
Had fallen in torrents; all the mountain tops
Were hidden, and black vapours coursed their sides;
This had I seen, and saw; but, till she spake,
Was wholly ignorant that my ancient Friend—
Who at her bidding, early and alone,
Had clomb aloft to delve the moorland[2] turf
For winter fuel—to his noontide meal
Returned not, and now, haply, on the heights[3]
Lay at the mercy of this raging storm.
'Inhuman!'—said I, 'was an old Man's life
Not worth the trouble of a thought?—alas!
This notice comes too late.' With joy I saw
Her husband enter—from a distant vale.
We sallied forth together; found the tools
Which the neglected veteran had dropped,
But through all quarters looked for him in vain.
We shouted—but no answer! Darkness fell
Without remission of the blast or shower,
And fears for our own safety drove us home.

"I, who weep little, did, I will confess,
The moment I was seated here alone,
Honour my little cell with some few tears

---

[1] 1827.
. . . . . from mid-noon the rain 1814.

[2] 1827.
. . . . mountain . 1814.

[3] 1827.
Came not, and now perchance upon the Heights 1814.

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Which anger and[1] resentment could not dry.
All night the storm endured; and, soon as help
Had been collected from the neighbouring vale,
With morning we renewed our quest: the wind
Was fallen, the rain abated, but the hills
Lay shrouded in impenetrable mist;
And long and hopelessly we sought in vain:
'Till, chancing on that[2] lofty ridge to pass
A heap of ruin—almost without walls
And wholly without roof (the bleached remains
Of a small chapel, where, in ancient time,
The peasants of these lonely valleys used
To meet for worship on that central height)—
We there espied the object of our search,[3]
Lying full three parts buried among tufts
Of heath-plant, under and above him strewn,
To baffle, as he might, the watery storm:
And there we found him breathing peaceably,
Snug as a child that hides itself in sport
'Mid a green hay-cock in a sunny field.
We spake—he made reply, but would not stir
At our entreaty; less from want of power
Than apprehension and bewildering thoughts.*

[1] 1827.
. . . . or . . . . . . 1814.

[2] 1827.
Till, chancing by yon . . . . . . 1814.

[3] 1827.
And wholly without roof (in ancient time
It was a Chapel, a small Edifice
In which the Peasants of these lonely Dells
For worship met upon that central height)—
Chancing to pass this wreck of stones, we there
Espied at last the Object of our search,
Couched in a nook, and seemingly alive.
It would have moved you, had you seen the guise
In which he occupied his chosen bed, 1814.

* "The character of his hostess, and all that befell the poor man upon the mountain, belongs to Paterdale. The woman I knew well; her name was

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"So was he lifted gently from the ground,
And with their freight homeward the shepherds[1] moved
Through the dull mist, I following—when a step,
A single step, that freed me from the skirts
Of the blind vapour, opened to my view
Glory beyond all glory ever seen
By waking sense or by the dreaming soul!
The appearance,[2] instantaneously disclosed,

---

[1] 1836.
. . . the Shepherds homeward . 1814.

[2] 1827.
. . . . . dreaming soul!
—Though I am conscious that no power of words
Can body forth, no hues of speech can paint
That gorgeous spectacle—too bright and fair
Even for remembrance; yet the attempt may give
Collateral interest to this homely Tale.
The Appearance, ... 1814.

Ruth Jackson, and she was exactly such a person as I describe. The ruins of the old chapel, among which the old man was found lying, may yet be traced, and stood upon the ridge that divides Paterdale from Boardale and Martindale, having been placed there for the convenience of both districts."—I. F.

The following is Dorothy Wordsworth's account of the same occurrence, given in a record of what she called "a Mountainous Ramble," written in 1805. Her brother afterwards incorporated this passage, with a few alterations, in his *Description of the Scenery of the Lakes.*

"Looked into Boar Dale above Sanwick—deep and bare, a stream winding down it. After having walked a considerable way on the tops of the hills, came in view of Glenridding and the mountains above Grisdale. Luff then took us aside, before we had begun to descend, to a small ruin, which was formerly a chapel or place of worship where the inhabitants of Martindale and Paterdale were accustomed to meet on Sundays. There are now no traces by which you could discover that the building had been different from a common sheepfold; the loose stones and the few which yet remain piled up are the same as those which lie about on the mountain; but the shape of the building being oblong is not that of a common sheepfold, and it stands east and west. Whether it was ever consecrated ground or not I know not; but the place may be kept holy in the memory of some now living in Paterdale; for it was the means of preserving the life of a poor old man last summer, who, having gone up the mountain to gather peats, had been overtaken by a storm, and could not find his way down again. He happened to be near the remains of the old chapel, and, in a corner of it, he contrived, by laying turf and ling and stones from one wall to the other, to make a shelter from the wind, and there he lay all night. The woman who had sent him on his errand began to grow uneasy towards night, and the neighbours went out to seek him. At that time the old man had housed himself in his nest, and he heard the voices of the men, but could not make *them* hear, the wind being so loud, and he was afraid to leave the spot lest he should not be able to find it again, so he remained there all night; and they returned to their

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Was of a mighty city—boldly say
A wilderness of building, sinking far
And self-withdrawn into a boundless[1] depth,
Far sinking into splendour—without end!
Fabric it seemed of diamond and of gold,
With alabaster domes, and silver spires,
And blazing terrace upon terrace, high
Uplifted; here, serene pavilions bright,
In avenues disposed; there, towers begirt
With battlements that on their restless fronts
Bore stars—illumination of all gems!
By earthly nature had the effect been wrought
Upon the dark materials of the storm
Now pacified; on them, and on the coves
And mountain-steeps and summits, whereunto
The vapours had receded, taking there
Their station under a cerulean sky.
Oh, 'twas an unimaginable sight!
Clouds, mists, streams, watery rocks and emerald turf,
Clouds of all tincture, rocks and sapphire sky,
Confused, commingled, mutually inflamed,
Molten together, and composing thus,
Each lost in each, that marvellous array
Of temple, palace, citadel, and huge
Fantastic pomp of structure without name,
In fleecy folds voluminous, enwrapped.
Right in the midst, where interspace appeared
Of open court, an object like a throne
Under[2] a shining canopy of state

---

[1] 1845.
. . . . . . wondrous . 1814.

[2] 1836.
Beneath . . . . 1814.

---

homes, giving him up for lost; but the next morning the same persons discovered him huddled up in the sheltered nook. He was at first stupefied and unable to move; but after he had eaten and drunk, and recollected himself a little, he walked down the mountain, and did not afterwards seem to have suffered."—Ed.

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Stood fixed; and fixed resemblances were seen
To implements of ordinary use,
But vast in size, in substance glorified;
Such as by Hebrew Prophets were beheld
In vision *—forms uncouth of mightiest power
For admiration and mysterious awe.
This little Vale, a dwelling-place of Man,[1]
Lay low beneath my feet; 'twas visible—
I saw not, but I felt that it was there.
That which I *saw* was the revealed abode
Of Spirits in beatitude: my heart
Swelled in my breast.—'I have been dead,' I cried,
'And now I live! Oh! wherefore *do* I live?'
And with that pang I prayed to be no more!—
—But I forget our Charge, as utterly
I then forgot him:—there I stood and gazed:
The apparition faded not away,
And I descended.†

"Having reached the house,
I found its rescued inmate safely lodged,
And in serene possession of himself,
Beside a fire whose genial warmth seemed met
By a faint shining from the heart, a gleam

---

[1] 1845.
Below me was the earth; this little Vale 1814.

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* Compare Ezekiel, chap. i.—Ed.

† "The glorious appearance disclosed above and among the mountains, was described partly from what my friend Mr. Luff, who then lived in Paterdale, witnessed upon that melancholy occasion, and partly from what Mary and I had seen, in company with Sir George and Lady Beaumont, above Hartshope Hall, on our way from Paterdale to Ambleside."—I. F.

Compare the lines 827-881 with the account of the view from the top of Snowdon, in *The Prelude*, book xiv. ll. 11-62 (vol. iii. pp. 367-68), and see Charles Lamb's remarks in his letter to Wordsworth (Aug. 14, 1814) on receiving a copy of *The Excursion*. (*Letters of Charles Lamb*, edited by Alfred Ainger, vol. i. p. 271.) In his *Table Talk* Coleridge expresses a wish "that the first two books of *The Excursion* had been published separately under the name of 'The Deserted Cottages.' They would have formed, what indeed they are, one of the most beautiful poems in the language." This advice has been followed more than once.—Ed.

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Of comfort, spread over his pallid face.[1]
Great show of joy the housewife made, and truly
Was glad to find her conscience set at ease;
And not less glad, for sake of her good name,
That the poor Sufferer had escaped with life.
But, though he seemed at first to have received
No harm, and uncomplaining as before
Went through his usual tasks, a silent change
Soon showed itself: he lingered three short weeks;
And from the cottage hath been borne to-day.

"So ends my dolorous tale, and glad I am
That it is ended." At these words he turned—
And, with blithe air of open fellowship,
Brought from the cupboard wine and stouter cheer,
Like one who would be merry. Seeing this,
My grey-haired Friend said courteously—"Nay, nay,
You have regaled us as a hermit ought;
Now let us forth into the sun!"—Our Host
Rose, though reluctantly, and forth we went.

Book Third

DESPONDENCY

ARGUMENT

Images in the Valley—Another Recess in it entered and described—Wanderer's sensations—Solitary's excited by the same objects—Contrast between these—Despondency of the Solitary gently reproved—Conversation exhibiting the Solitary's past and present opinions and feelings, till he enters upon his own History at length—His domestic felicity—Afflictions—Dejection—Roused by the French Revolution—Disappointment and disgust—Voyage to America—Disappointment

[1] 1836.

Beside a genial fire; that seemed to spread
A gleam of comfort o'er his pallid face. 1814.

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and disgust pursue him—His return—His languor and depression of mind, from want of faith in the great truths of Religion, and want of confidence in the virtue of Mankind.

A HUMMING BEE—a little tinkling rill—
A pair of falcons wheeling on the wing,
In clamorous agitation, round the crest
Of a tall rock, their airy citadel—
By each and all of these the pensive ear
Was greeted, in the silence that ensued,
When through the cottage threshold we had passed,
And, deep within that lonesome valley, stood
Once more beneath the concave of a[1] blue
And cloudless sky.—Anon exclaimed our Host,
Triumphantly dispersing with the taunt
The shade of discontent which on his brow
Had gathered,—"Ye have left my cell,—but see
How Nature hems you in with friendly arms!
And by her help ye are my prisoners still.
But which way shall I lead you?—how contrive,
In spot so parsimoniously endowed,
That the brief hours, which yet remain, may reap
Some recompense of knowledge or delight?"
So saying, round he looked, as if perplexed;
And, to remove those doubts, my grey-haired Friend
Said—"Shall we take this pathway for our guide?—
Upward it winds, as if, in summer heats,
Its line had first been fashioned by the flock
Seeking a place of refuge[2] at the root
Of yon black Yew-tree, whose protruded boughs
Darken the silver bosom of the crag,*

[1] 1827.
. . . . . . the . 1814.

[2] 1836.
A place of refuge seeking . . . 1814.

* There is still a single "yew-tree" high up the eastern side of the valley on the face of Lingmoor Fell,

Darkening the silver bosom of the crag. ED.

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From which she draws her[1] meagre sustenance.
There in commodious shelter may we rest.
Or let us trace this streamlet to its[2] source;
Feebly it tinkles with an earthy sound,
And a few steps may bring us to the spot
Where, haply, crowned with flowerets and green herbs,
The mountain infant to the sun comes forth,
Like human life from darkness."—A quick turn[3]
Through a strait passage of encumbered ground,
Proved that such hope was vain:—for now we stood
Shut out from prospect of the open vale,
And saw the water, that composed this rill,
Descending, disembodied, and diffused
O'er the smooth surface of an ample crag,
Lofty, and steep, and naked as a tower.
All further progress here was barred;—And who,
Thought I, if master of a vacant hour,
Here would not linger, willingly detained?
Whether to such wild objects he were led
When copious rains have magnified the stream
Into a loud and white-robed waterfall,
Or introduced at this more quiet time.

Upon a semicirque of turf-clad ground,
The hidden nook discovered to our view
A mass of rock, resembling, as it lay
Right at the foot of that moist precipice,
A stranded ship, with keel upturned, that rests
Fearless of winds and waves. Three several stones
Stood near, of smaller size, and not unlike

[1] 1827.
. . it draws its . . . . . 1814.

[2] 1814.
. . . . . . his . . 1832.
1845 returns to 1814.

[3] 1827.
. . . . . At the word
We followed where he led:—a sudden turn 1814.

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To monumental pillars: and, from these
Some little space disjoined, a pair were seen,
That with united shoulders bore aloft
A fragment, like an altar, flat and smooth:
Barren the tablet, yet thereon appeared [1]
A tall and shining holly, that [2] had found
A hospitable chink, and stood upright,
As if inserted by some human hand
In mockery, to wither in the sun,
Or lay its beauty flat before a breeze,
The first that entered. But no breeze did now
Find entrance;—high or low appeared no trace
Of motion, save the water that descended,
Diffused adown that barrier of steep rock,
And softly creeping, like a breath of air,
Such as is sometimes seen, and hardly seen,
To brush the still breast of a crystal lake.*

[1] 1827.

. . . . yet thereon appeared
Conspicuously stationed, one fair Plant, 1814.

[2] 1827.

. . . . . which . . 1814.

* The local allusions in this passage, and in what follows, are most exact and literal. The three men are supposed to leave the cottage, and to cross to the west side of the tarn, just a little to the north of the fir-wood which overshadows it. The "barrier of steep rock" is the low perpendicular crag to the west of the tarn, immediately below the fir-wood, and the "semicirque of turf-clad ground" is apparent at a glance, whether seen from below the rock or from above it. There are many fragments of ice-borne rock, high up the flank of Blake Rigg to the west, and on the slopes of Lingmoor to the east, which might at first sight be mistaken for the stone, like

A stranded ship, with keel upturned, that rests
Fearless of winds and waves,

or the

fragment, like an altar;

but this particular mass of rock lay

Right at the foot of that moist precipice,

and there it still lies, obvious enough even to the casual eye. The "semicirque" is the cup-shaped recess between the fir-wood and the cliff; and on entering it, the mass of rock is seen lying north-west to north-east. It is not ice-borne, but a fragment dislodged from the crag above it. It is now broken into three smaller fragments, by the weathering of many years. Cracked probably when it fell, the rents have widened, and the fragments are separ-

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"Behold a cabinet for sages built,
Which kings might envy!"—Praise to this effect
Broke from the happy old Man's reverend lip;
Who to the Solitary turned, and said,
"In sooth, with love's familiar privilege,
You have decried the wealth which is your own.[1]
Among these rocks and stones, methinks, I see
More than the heedless impress that belongs
To lonely nature's casual work: they bear
A semblance strange of power intelligent,
And of design not wholly worn away.
Boldest of plants that ever faced the wind,
How gracefully that slender shrub looks forth
From its fantastic birth-place! And I own,
Some shadowy intimations haunt me here,
That in these shows[2] a chronicle survives
Of purposes akin to those of Man,*

[1] 1827.
You have decried, in no unseemly terms
Of modesty, that wealth which is your own. 1814.

[2] 1827.
I cannot but incline to a belief
That in these shows . . . . 1814.

ated by the frosts of many winters. A sycamore of average size is now growing at its side; its root being in the cleft, where the stone is broken. Holly grows luxuriantly all along the face of the crag above; so that the existence of the bush, described as growing in the stone which resembled an altar, is easily explained. The brook is a short one, flowing through the meadow-pastures of the wood, and after a hundred yards is lost in the turfy slope, but is seen again upon the face of the "moist precipice," "softly creeping"—precisely as described in the poem. The "three several stones" that "stand near" are, I think, the one to the front, in a line with the keel of the ship; and the other two to the right and left respectively. The "pair," with the "fragment like an altar, flat and smooth," are to the left, and close at hand.

In connection with all this a remark of Southey's to J. Neville White may be quoted. "Keswick, September 7, 1814. . . . Have you read Wordsworth's poem? If not, read it, if you can, before you see the author. You will see him with the more pleasure, and look with more interest at the scenery he describes." (*Selections from the Letters of Robert Southey*, vol. ii. p. 376.)—Ed.

* Lady Richardson writes thus of a visit Wordsworth paid to Lancrigg in 1841:—"We took a walk on the terrace, and he went as usual to his favourite points. On our return he was struck with the berries on the holly tree, and said, 'Why should not you and I go and pull some berries from the

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But wrought with mightier arm than now prevails.
—Voiceless the stream descends into the gulf
With timid lapse;—and lo! while in this strait
I stand—the chasm of sky above my head
Is heaven's profoundest azure; no domain
For fickle, short-lived clouds to occupy,
Or to pass through; but rather an abyss
In which the everlasting stars abide;
And whose soft gloom, and boundless depth, might tempt
The curious eye to look for them by day.*
—Hail Contemplation! from the stately towers,
Reared by the industrious hand of human art
To lift thee high above the misty air
And turbulence of murmuring cities vast;
From academic groves, that have for thee
Been planted, hither come and find a lodge
To which thou mayst resort for holier peace,—
From whose calm centre thou, through height or depth,
Mayst penetrate, wherever truth shall lead;
Measuring through all degrees, until the scale
Of time and conscious nature disappear,
Lost in unsearchable eternity!" †

---

other side of the tree, which is not seen from the window? and then we can go and plant them in the rocky ground behind the house.' We pulled the berries, and set forth with our tools. I made the holes, and the poet put in the berries. He was as earnest and eager about it as if it had been a matter of importance, and, as he put the seeds in, he every now and then muttered, in his low, solemn tone, that beautiful verse from Burns' *Vision*:—

'And wear thou this,' she solemn said,
And bound the holly round my head:
The polish'd leaves, and berries red,
Did rustling play;
And, like a passing thought, she fled
In light away.

He clambered to the highest rocks in the 'Tom Intak,' and put in the berries in such situations as Nature sometimes does, with such true and beautiful effect. He said, 'I like to do this for posterity.'"—Ed.

* —Voiceless the stream descends . . .
With timid lapse . . . . . .

is a perfect description of this tiniest and gentlest of rills, flowing through the meadow-grass; while the "chasm of sky above," of which the Wanderer speaks, though an obvious exaggeration, is more appropriate to this spot than to any other in the vale.—Ed.

† See Wordsworth's note, p. 385.—Ed.

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A pause ensued; and with minuter care
We scanned the various features of the scene:
And soon the Tenant of that lonely vale
With courteous voice thus spake—
"I should have grieved
Hereafter, not escaping self-reproach,[1]
If from my poor retirement ye had gone
Leaving this nook unvisited; but, in sooth,
Your unexpected presence had so roused
My spirits, that they were bent on enterprise;
And, like an ardent hunter, I forgot,
Or, shall I say?—disdained, the game that lurks[2]
At my own door. The shapes before our eyes,
And their arrangement, doubtless must be deemed
The sport of Nature, aided by blind Chance
Rudely to mock the works of toiling Man.
And hence, this upright shaft of unhewn stone,
From Fancy, willing to set off her stores
By sounding titles, hath acquired the name
Of Pompey's pillar; that I gravely style
My Theban obelisk; and, there, behold
A Druid cromlech!—thus I entertain
The antiquarian humour, and am pleased
To skim along the surfaces of things,
Beguiling harmlessly the listless hours.
But if the spirit be oppressed by sense
Of instability, revolt, decay,
And change, and emptiness, these freaks of Nature
And her blind helper Chance, do *then* suffice
To quicken, and to aggravate—to feed
Pity and scorn, and melancholy pride,
Not less than that huge Pile (from some abyss

---

[1] 1827.
. . should perhaps have blamed myself, 1814.

[2] 1827.
. . . . lurked 1814.

Of mortal power unquestionably sprung) *
Whose hoary diadem of pendent rocks
Confines the shrill-voiced whirlwind, round and round
Eddying within its vast circumference,
On Sarum's naked plain—than pyramid
Of Egypt, unsubverted, undissolved—
Or Syria's marble ruins towering high †
Above the sandy desert, in the light
Of sun or moon.—Forgive me, if I say
That an appearance which hath raised your minds
To an exalted pitch (the self-same cause
Different effect producing) is for me
Fraught rather with depression than delight,
Though shame it were, could I not look around,[1]
By the reflection of your pleasure, pleased.
Yet happier, in my judgment, even than you
With your bright transports, fairly may be deemed
The wandering Herbalist,[2]—who, clear alike
From vain, and, that worse evil, vexing thoughts,
Casts, if he ever chance to enter here,
Upon these uncouth Forms [3] a slight regard

---

[1] 1827.
. . . . . . look around me, 1814.

[2] 1827.
. . . . deemed,
Is He (if such have ever entered here)
The wandering Herbalist,— . . . . 1814.

[3] 1827.
. . . . . . vexing thoughts,
Casts on these uncouth Forms . . . . 1814.

---

* Stonehenge. Old legends gave it a mythic origin. Geoffrey of Monmouth attributed it to Merlin, the stones having been brought over from Ireland by magic. It was not a Druid Temple, but a Saxon ring, set up—after the Romans had left Britain—for parliamentary and coronation purposes. "Roman pottery and coins have been found under the stones, and they are fitted with mortice and tenon, an art unknown in Britain till it was taught by the Romans." Compare Dryden's *Epistle to Dr. Charleton* (Ep. II.)

Stonehenge, once thought a temple, you have found
A throne, where kings, our earthly Gods, were crown'd.

and Henry Crabb Robinson's account of a visit to Stonehenge, in the second volume of his *Diary and Correspondence*, p. 230.—Ed.

† This must refer to Palmyra. The Baalbec ruins are, for the most part, not marble, but limestone.—Ed.

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Of transitory interest, and peeps round
For some rare floweret of the hills, or plant
Of craggy fountain; what he hopes for wins,
Or learns, at least, that 'tis not to be won:
Then, keen and eager, as a fine-nosed hound
By soul-engrossing instinct driven along
Through wood or open field, the harmless Man
Departs, intent upon his onward quest!—
Nor is that Fellow-wanderer, so deem I,
Less to be envied, (you may trace him oft
By scars which his activity has left
Beside our roads and pathways, though, thank Heaven!
This covert nook reports not of his hand)
He who with pocket-hammer smites the edge
Of luckless rock or prominent stone, disguised
In weather-stains or crusted o'er by Nature
With her first growths,[1] detaching by the stroke
A chip or splinter—to resolve his doubts;
And, with that ready answer satisfied,
The substance classes by some barbarous name,
And [2] hurries on; or from the fragments picks
His specimen, if but haply interveined [3]
With sparkling mineral, or should crystal cube
Lurk in its cells—and thinks himself enriched,
Wealthier, and doubtless wiser, than before!
Intrusted safely each to his pursuit,
Earnest alike, let both from hill to hill

---

[1] 1827.
Of every luckless rock or stone that stands
Before his sight, by weather-stains disguised,
Or crusted o'er with vegetation thin,
Nature's first growth, ... 1814.

[2] 1827.
Doth to the substance give some barbarous name,
Then . . . . 1814.

[3] 1845.
. . . . if haply interveined 1814.

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Range;[1] if it please them, speed from clime to clime;
The mind is full—and free from pain their pastime."[2]

"Then," said I, interposing, "One is near,
Who cannot but possess in your esteem
Place worthier still of envy. May I name,
Without offence, that fair-faced cottage-boy?
Dame Nature's pupil of the lowest form,
Youngest apprentice in the school of art!
Him, as we entered from the open glen,
You might have noticed, busily engaged,
Heart, soul, and hands,—in mending the defects
Left in the fabric of a leaky dam
Raised[3] for enabling this penurious stream
To turn a slender mill (that new-made plaything)
For his delight—the happiest he of all!"

"Far happiest," answered the desponding Man,
"If, such as now he is, he might remain!
Ah! what avails imagination high
Or question deep? what profits all that earth,
Or heaven's blue vault, is suffered to put forth
Of impulse or allurement, for the Soul
To quit the beaten track of life, and soar
Far as she finds a yielding element
In past or future; far as she can go
Through time or space—if neither in the one,
Nor in the other region, nor in aught
That Fancy, dreaming o'er the map of things,
Hath placed beyond these penetrable bounds,

---

[1] 1827.
This earnest Pair may range from hill to hill,
And, ... 1814.

[2] 1845.
. . . . no pain is in their sport." 1814.

[3] 1827.
Framed . . . . . . 1814.

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Words of assurance can be heard; if nowhere
A habitation, for consummate good,
Or for[1] progressive virtue, by the search
Can be attained,—a better sanctuary
From doubt and sorrow, than the senseless grave?"

"Is this," the grey-haired Wanderer mildly said,
"The voice, which we so lately overheard,
To that same child, addressing tenderly
The consolations of a hopeful mind?
'*His body is at rest, his soul in heaven.*'
These were your words; and, verily, methinks
Wisdom is oft-times nearer when we stoop
Than when we soar."—
The Other, not displeased,
Promptly replied—"My notion is the same.
And I, without reluctance, could decline
All act of inquisition whence we rise,
And what, when breath hath ceased, we may become.
Here are we, in a bright and breathing world.
Our origin, what matters it? In lack
Of worthier explanation, say at once
With the American (a thought which suits
The place where now we stand) that certain men
Leapt out together from a rocky cave;*
And these were the first parents of mankind:
Or, if a different image be recalled
By the warm sunshine, and the jocund voice
Of insects chirping out their careless lives
On these soft beds of thyme-besprinkled turf,
Choose, with the gay Athenian, a conceit
As sound—blithe race! whose mantles were bedecked

---

[1] 1814.
Nor for . . . . 1827.
The text of 1845 returns to that of 1814.

---

* The Navagos and several other American tribes have this legend; but see Note B in the Appendix to this volume, p. 392.—Ed.

With golden grasshoppers,* in sign that they
Had sprung, like those bright creatures, from the soil
Whereon their endless generations dwelt.[1]
But stop!—these theoretic fancies jar
On serious minds: then, as the Hindoos draw[2]
Their holy Ganges from a skiey fount,†
Even so deduce the stream of human life
From seats of power divine; and hope, or trust,
That our existence winds her[3] stately course
Beneath the sun, like Ganges, to make part
Of a living ocean; or, to sink engulfed,[4]
Like Niger, in impenetrable sands
And utter darkness: ‡ thought which may be faced,
Though comfortless!—
"Not of myself I speak;
Such acquiescence neither doth imply,
In me, a meekly-bending spirit soothed
By natural piety; nor a lofty mind,
By philosophic discipline prepared
For calm subjection to acknowledged law;

---

[1] 1827.
As sound; with that blithe race who wore ere-while
Their golden Grasshoppers, in sign that they
Had sprung from out the soil whereon they dwelt. 1814.

[2] 1827.
On serious minds; for doubtless, in one sense,
The theme *is* serious; then, as Hindoos draw 1814.

[3] 1827.
. . . . . . its . . . 1814.

1827.
. . . . or, if such may seem
Its tendency, to be engulphed and lost 1814.

---

* Before the time of Solon, the Athenians wore golden τέττιγες—probably either brooches, or pins with a golden cicada for the head—as a sign that they considered themselves αὐτόχθονες, since the grasshopper τέττιξ (cicada) was supposed to spring out of the ground.—Ed.

† The Ganges—sacred river of India—rising in the snow-clad Himalaya, was believed to have a celestial origin.—Ed.

‡ The great river of Western Africa, which was supposed, until recent geographical discovery, to lose itself in the sand.—Ed.

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Pleased to have been, contented not to be.
Such palms I boast not;—no! to me, who find,
Reviewing my past way, much to condemn,
Little to praise, and nothing to regret,
(Save some remembrances of dream-like joys
That scarcely seem to have belonged to me)
If I must take my choice between the pair
That rule alternately the weary hours,
Night is than day more acceptable; sleep
Doth, in my estimate of good, appear
A better state than waking; death than sleep:
Feelingly sweet is stillness after storm,
Though under covert of the wormy ground!

"Yet be it said, in justice to myself,
That in more genial times, when I was free
To explore the destiny of human kind
(Not as an intellectual game pursued
With curious subtilty, from wish[1] to cheat
Irksome sensations; but by love of truth
Urged on, or haply by intense delight
In feeding thought, wherever thought could feed)
I did not rank with those (too dull or nice,
For to my judgment such they then appeared,
Or too aspiring, thankless at the best)
Who, in this frame of human life, perceive
An object whereunto their souls are tied
In discontented wedlock; nor did e'er,
From me, those dark impervious shades, that hang
Upon the region whither we are bound,
Exclude a power to enjoy the vital beams
Of present sunshine.—Deities that float
On wings, angelic Spirits! I could muse
O'er what from eldest time we have been told
Of your bright forms and glorious faculties,

[1] 1827.
. . . . . thereby . . 1814.

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And with the imagination rest[1] content,
Not wishing more; repining not to tread
The little sinuous path of earthly care,
By flowers embellished, and by springs refreshed.[2]
—'Blow winds of autumn!—let your chilling breath
'Take the live herbage from the mead, and strip
'The shady forest of its green attire,—
'And let the bursting clouds to fury rouse
'The gentle brooks!—Your desolating sway,
'Sheds,' I exclaimed, 'no sadness upon me,[3]
'And no disorder in your rage I find.
'What dignity, what beauty, in this change
'From mild to angry, and from sad to gay,
'Alternate and revolving! How benign,
'How rich in animation and delight,
'How bountiful these elements—compared
'With aught, as more desirable and fair,
'Devised by fancy for the golden age;
'Or the perpetual warbling that prevails
'In Arcady,* beneath unaltered skies,
'Through the long year in constant quiet bound,
'Night hushed as night, and day serene as day!'
—But why this tedious record?—Age, we know,
Is garrulous; and solitude is apt
To anticipate the privilege of Age.
From far ye come; and surely with a hope
Of better entertainment:—let us hence!"

---

[1] 1845.
. . . . . be . . 1814.

[2] 1814.
Embellished by sweet flowers, by springs refreshed. C.

[3] 1836.
Thus I exclaimed, "no sadness sheds on me, 1814.

---

* Compare *The Prelude*, book viii. l. 133 (see vol. iii. p. 276). Also *In Memoriam*, stanza xxiii.—

And round us all the thicket rang
To many a flute of Arcady. ED.

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Loth to forsake the spot, and still more loth
To be diverted from our present theme,
I said, "My thoughts, agreeing, Sir, with yours,
Would push this censure farther;—for, if smiles
Of scornful pity be the just reward
Of Poesy thus courteously employed
In framing models to improve the scheme
Of Man's existence, and recast the world,
Why should not grave Philosophy be styled,
Herself, a dreamer of a kindred stock,
A dreamer yet more spiritless and dull?
Yes, shall the fine immunities she boasts [1]
Establish sounder titles of esteem
For her, who (all too timid and reserved
For onset, for resistance too inert,
Too weak for suffering, and for hope too tame)
Placed, among [2] flowery gardens curtained round
With world-excluding groves, the brotherhood
Of soft Epicureans,* taught—if they
The ends of being would secure, and win
The crown of wisdom—to yield up their souls
To a voluptuous unconcern, preferring
Tranquillity to all things. Or is she,"
I cried, "more worthy of regard, the Power,
Who, for the sake of sterner quiet, closed

---

[1] 1827.
Yes," said I, "shall the immunities to which
She doth lay claim, the precepts she bestows, 1814.

[2] 1827.
Did place, in . . . . 1814.

---

* The end sought by Epicurus, the ***summum bonum*** of the Epicurean school, was *ἀταραξία*, repose or peace of mind. This was to be obtained by freedom from pain of body or distraction of mind; but it consisted in the harmony or equilibrium that resulted, when disturbing influences were withdrawn. To attain to it, little was needed—mental enjoyments being superior to bodily ones, and the social joys of friendship the highest of all. Public life was renounced, and private friendship became the bond of union amongst the members of the Epicurean confraternity: but the root principle of the system was emotional, not intellectual.—Ed.

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The Stoic's * heart against the vain approach
Of admiration, and all sense of joy?"

His countenance gave notice that my zeal
Accorded little with his present mind;
I ceased, and he resumed.—"Ah! gentle Sir,
Slight, if you will, the *means;* but spare to slight
The *end* of those, who did, by system, rank,
As the prime object of a wise man's aim,
Security from shock of accident,
Release from fear; and cherished peaceful days
For their own sakes, as mortal life's chief good,
And only reasonable felicity.
What motive drew, what impulse, I would ask,
Through a long course of later ages, drove
The hermit to his cell in forest wide;
Or what detained him, till his closing eyes
Took their last farewell of the sun and stars,
Fast anchored in the desert?—Not alone
Dread of the persecuting sword, remorse,
Wrongs unredressed, or insults unavenged
And unavengeable, defeated pride,
Prosperity subverted, maddening want,
Friendship betrayed, affection unreturned,
Love with despair, or grief in agony;—
Not always from intolerable pangs
He fled; but, compassed round by pleasure, sighed
For independent happiness; craving peace,
The central feeling of all happiness,
Not as a refuge from distress or pain,
A breathing-time, vacation, or a truce,

* Rational self-control being regarded as the chief good by the Stoics, the emotion of happiness was looked upon as an interruption of the equilibrium in which the wise man should live. All the emotions were diseases, or disturbances of human nature less or more. They had therefore to be uprooted, rather than regulated: and virtue consisted in being emotionless, passionless, apathetic, with life conformed to the laws of the pure reason, so that one came to be

A reasoning self-sufficing thing,
An intellectual all-in-all. Ed.

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But for its absolute self; a life of peace,
Stability without regret or fear;
That hath been, is, and shall be evermore!—
Such the reward he sought; and wore out life,
There, where on few external things his heart
Was set, and those his own; or, if not his,
Subsisting under nature's stedfast law.

"What other yearning was the master tie
Of the monastic brotherhood, upon rock
Aërial, or in green secluded vale,
One after one, collected from afar,
An undissolving fellowship?—What but this,
The universal instinct of repose,
The longing for confirmed tranquillity,
Inward and outward; humble, yet sublime:
The life where hope and memory are as one;
Where earth is quiet and her face unchanged
Save by the simplest toil of human hands
Or seasons' difference; the immortal Soul[1]
Consistent in self-rule; and heaven revealed
To meditation in that quietness!—
Such was their scheme: and though the wished for end
By multitudes was missed, perhaps attained
By none, they for the attempt, and pains employed,[2]
Do, in my present censure, stand redeemed
From the unqualified disdain, that once
Would have been cast upon them by my voice
Delivering her[3] decisions from the seat

---

[1] 1845.

. . . . . memory are as one;
Earth quiet and unchanged; the human Soul 1814.

[2] 1845.

Such was their scheme:—thrice happy he who gained
The end proposed! And,—though the same were missed
By multitudes, perhaps obtained by none,—
They, for the attempt, and for the pains employed, 1814.

[3] 1832.

. . its . . . . . 1814.

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Of forward youth—that scruples not to solve
Doubts, and determine questions, by the rules
Of inexperienced judgment, ever prone
To overweening faith; and is inflamed,
By courage, to demand from real life
The test of act and suffering, to provoke
Hostility—how dreadful when it comes,
Whether affliction be the foe, or guilt!

"A child of earth, I rested, in that stage
Of my past course to which these thoughts advert,
Upon earth's native energies; forgetting
That mine was a condition which required
Nor energy, nor fortitude—a calm
Without vicissitude; which, if the like
Had been presented to my view elsewhere,
I might have even been tempted to despise.
But no—for the serene[1] was also bright;
Enlivened happiness with joy o'erflowing,
With joy, and—oh! that memory should survive
To speak the word—with rapture! Nature's boon,
Life's genuine inspiration, happiness
Above what rules can teach, or fancy feign;
Abused, as all possessions *are*[2] abused
That are not prized according to their worth.
And yet, what worth? what good is given to men,
More solid than the gilded clouds of heaven?
What joy more lasting than a vernal flower?
None! 'tis the general plaint of human kind
In solitude: and mutually addressed
From each to all, for wisdom's sake:—This truth
The priest announces from his holy seat:
And, crowned with garlands in the summer grove,
The poet fits it to his pensive lyre.
Yet, ere that final resting-place be gained,

---

[1] 1836.
But that which was serene . . . . 1814.

[2] Italics were first used in 1836.

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Sharp contradictions may arise, by doom
Of this same life, compelling us to grieve[1]
That the prosperities of love and joy
Should be permitted, oft-times, to endure
So long, and be at once cast down for ever.
Oh! tremble, ye, to whom hath been assigned
A course of days composing happy months,
And they as happy years; the present still
So like the past, and both so firm a pledge
Of a congenial future, that the wheels
Of pleasure move without the aid of hope:
For Mutability is Nature's bane;
And slighted Hope *will*[2] be avenged; and, when
Ye need her favours, ye shall find her not;
But in her stead—fear—doubt—and agony!"

This was the bitter language of the heart:
But, while he spake, look, gesture, tone of voice,
Though discomposed and vehement, were such
As skill and graceful nature might suggest
To a proficient of the tragic scene
Standing before the multitude, beset
With dark events. Desirous to divert[3]
Or stem the current of the speaker's thoughts,
We signified a wish to leave that place
Of stillness and close privacy, a nook
That seemed for self-examination made;[4]

---

[1] 1827.
Sharp contradictions hourly shall arise
To cross the way; and we, perchance, by doom
Of this same life, shall be compelled to grieve 1814.

[2] Italics were first used in 1832.

[3] 1827.
With sorrowful events; and we, who heard
And saw, were moved. Desirous to divert, 1814.

With trouble, conflict that he seeks and shuns
With the same breath, desirous to divert C.

[4] 1827.
. . . . which seemed
A nook for self-examination framed, 1814.

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Or, for confession, in the sinner's need,
Hidden from all men's view.* To our attempt
He yielded not; but, pointing to a slope
Of mossy turf defended from the sun,
And on that couch inviting us to rest,
Full on[1] that tender-hearted Man he turned
A serious eye, and his speech thus[2] renewed.

"You never saw, your eyes did never look
On the bright form of Her whom once I loved:—
Her silver voice was heard upon the earth,
A sound unknown to you; else, honoured Friend!
Your heart had borne a pitiable share
Of what I suffered, when I wept that loss,
And suffer now, not seldom, from the thought
That I remember, and can weep no more.—
Stripped as I am of all the golden fruit
Of self-esteem; and by the cutting blasts
Of self-reproach familiarly assailed;
Yet would I not be[3] of such wintry bareness
But that some leaf of your regard should hang
Upon my naked branches:—lively thoughts
Give birth, full often, to unguarded words;
I grieve that, in your presence, from my tongue
Too much of frailty hath already dropped;
But that too much demands still more.
"You know,
Revered Compatriot—and to you, kind Sir,
(Not to be deemed a stranger, as you come

---

[1] 1827.
Towards . . . . 1814.

[2] 1836.
. . . . thus his speech . . 1814.

[3] 1836.
I would not yet be . . . . . 1814.

---

* Compare the No. VI. Sonnet on *The Trosachs* (ll. 1-5), in "Yarrow Revisited, and other Poems" (1831).—Ed.

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Following the guidance of these welcome feet
To our secluded vale) it may be told—
That my demerits did not sue in vain
To One on whose mild radiance many gazed
With hope, and all with pleasure. This fair Bride—
In the devotedness of youthful love,
Preferring me to parents, and the choir
Of gay companions, to the natal roof,
And all known places and familiar sights
(Resigned with sadness gently weighing down
Her trembling expectations, but no more
Than did to her due honour, and to me
Yielded, that day, a confidence sublime
In what I had to build upon)—this Bride,
Young, modest, meek, and beautiful, I led
To a low cottage in a sunny bay,
Where the salt sea innocuously breaks,
And the sea breeze as innocently breathes,
On Devon's leafy shores; *—a sheltered hold,
In a soft clime encouraging the soil
To a luxuriant bounty!—As our steps
Approach the embowered abode—our chosen seat—
See, rooted in the earth, her [1] kindly bed,
The unendangered myrtle, decked with flowers,
Before the threshold stands to welcome us!
While, in the flowering myrtle's neighbourhood,
Not overlooked but courting no regard,
Those native plants, the holly and the yew,

---

[1] 1827.
. . . . . its . . 1814.

---

* These are reminiscences of Wordsworth's life at Racedown and Alfoxden. His sister wrote thus of their residence at Alfoxden:—"We are three miles from Stowey, and not two miles from the sea. Wherever we turn we have woods, smooth downs, and valleys with small brooks running down them, through green meadows, hardly ever intersected with hedgerows, but scattered over with trees. The hills that cradle these valleys are either covered with fern and bilberries, or oak woods, which are cut for charcoal. . . . Walks extend for miles over the hill-tops; the great beauty of which is their wild simplicity: they are perfectly smooth, without rocks."—*Memoirs of William Wordsworth*, by his nephew Christopher Wordsworth, late Bishop of Lincoln, vol. i. p. 103.—Ed.

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Gave modest intimation to the mind
How willingly their aid[1] they would unite
With the green myrtle, to endear the hours
Of winter, and protect that pleasant place.
—Wild were the walks upon those lonely Downs,*
Track leading into track; how marked, how worn
Into bright verdure, between fern and gorse,
Winding away its never ending line
On their smooth surface, evidence was none:
But, there, lay open to our daily haunt
A range of unappropriated earth,
Where youth's ambitious feet might move at large;
Whence, unmolested wanderers, we beheld
The shining giver of the day diffuse
His brightness o'er a tract of sea and land
Gay as our spirits, free as our desires;
As our enjoyments, boundless.—From those heights
We dropped, at pleasure, into sylvan combs;*
Where arbours of impenetrable shade,
And mossy seats, detained us side by side,
With hearts at ease, and knowledge in our hearts
'That all the grove and all the day was ours.'

"O happy time! still happier was at hand;
For Nature called my Partner to resign
Her share in the pure freedom of that life,[2]
Enjoyed by us in common.—To my hope,
To my heart's wish, my tender Mate became

[1] 1827.
Of willingness with which . . . . . 1814.

[2] 1845.
But in due season Nature interfered,
And called my Partner to resign her share
In the pure freedom of that wedded life, 1814.

But Nature called my Partner to resign
Her share in the pure freedom of that life, 1827.

* See the note on the preceding page.—Ed.

The thankful captive of maternal bonds;
And those wild paths were left to me alone.
There could I meditate on follies past;
And, like a weary voyager escaped
From risk and hardship, inwardly retrace
A course of vain delights and thoughtless guilt,
And self-indulgence—without shame pursued.
There, undisturbed, could think of and could thank
Her whose submissive spirit was to me
Rule and restraint—my guardian—shall I say
That earthly Providence, whose guiding love
Within a port of rest had lodged me safe;
Safe from temptation, and from danger far?
Strains followed of acknowledgment addressed
To an Authority enthroned above
The reach of sight; from whom, as from their source,
Proceed all visible ministers of good
That walk the earth—Father of heaven and earth,
Father, and king, and judge, adored and feared!
These acts of mind, and memory, and heart,
And spirit—interrupted and relieved
By observations transient as the glance
Of flying sunbeams, or to the outward form
Cleaving with power inherent and intense,
As the mute insect fixed upon the plant
On whose soft leaves it hangs, and from whose cup
It draws its nourishment imperceptibly—[1]
Endeared my wanderings; and the mother's kiss
And infant's smile awaited my return.

"In privacy we dwelt, a wedded pair,
Companions daily, often all day long;
Not placed by fortune within easy reach
Of various intercourse, nor wishing aught
Beyond the allowance of our own fire-side,

[1] 1845.
Draws imperceptibly its nourishment,— 1814.

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The twain within our happy cottage born,
Inmates, and heirs of our united love;
Graced mutually by difference of sex,
And with[1] no wider interval of time
Between their several births than served for one
To establish something of a leader's sway;
Yet left them joined by sympathy in age;
Equals in pleasure, fellows in pursuit.
On these two pillars rested as in air
Our solitude.
"It soothes me to perceive,
Your courtesy withholds not from my words
Attentive audience. But, oh! gentle Friends,
As times of quiet and unbroken peace,
Though, for a nation, times of blessedness,
Give back faint echoes from the historian's page;
So, in the imperfect sounds of this discourse,
Depressed I hear, how faithless is the voice
Which those most blissful days reverberate.
What special record can, or need, be given
To rules and habits, whereby much was done,
But all within the sphere of little things;
Of humble, though, to us, important cares,
And precious interests? Smoothly did our life
Advance, swerving not[2] from the path prescribed;
Her annual, her diurnal, round alike
Maintained with faithful care. And you divine
The worst effects that[3] our condition saw
If you imagine changes slowly wrought,

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[1] 1845.
. . . . of sex,
By the endearing names of nature bound,
And with . . . . 1814.

[2] 1836.
. . not swerving . . . . . 1814.

[3] 1827.
. . . . which . . . . . 1814.

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And in their progress[1] unperceivable;[2]
Not wished for; sometimes noticed with a sigh,
(Whate'er of good or lovely they might bring)
Sighs of regret, for the familiar good
And loveliness endeared which they removed.

"Seven years of occupation undisturbed
Established seemingly a right to hold
That happiness; and use and habit gave
To what an alien spirit had acquired
A patrimonial sanctity. And thus,
With thoughts and wishes bounded to this world,
I lived and breathed; most grateful—if to enjoy
Without repining or desire for more,
For different lot, or change to higher sphere,
(Only except some impulses of pride
With no determined object, though upheld
By theories with suitable support)—
Most grateful, if in such wise to enjoy
Be proof of gratitude for what we have;
Else, I allow, most thankless.—But, at once,
From some dark seat of fatal power was urged
A claim that shattered all.—Our blooming girl,
Caught in the gripe of death, with such brief time
To struggle in as scarcely would allow
Her cheek to change its colour, was conveyed
From us to inaccessible worlds, to regions[3]
Where height, or depth, admits not the approach
Of living man, though longing to pursue.
—With even as brief a warning—and how soon,
With what short interval of time between,
I tremble yet to think of—our last prop,

[1] 1814.
. . . process . . . 1850.

[2] 1845.
. . . . . imperceptible, 1814.

[3] 1845.
From us, to regions inaccessible; 1814.

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Our happy life's only remaining stay—
The brother followed; and was seen no more! *

"Calm as a frozen lake when ruthless winds
Blow fiercely, agitating earth and sky,
The Mother now remained; as if in her,
Who, to the lowest region of the soul,
Had been erewhile unsettled and disturbed,
This second visitation had no power
To shake; but only to bind up and seal;
And to establish thankfulness of heart
In Heaven's determinations, ever just.
The eminence whereon[1] her spirit stood,
Mine was unable to attain. Immense
The space that severed us! But, as the sight
Communicates with heaven's ethereal orbs
Incalculably distant; so, I felt
That consolation may descend from far
(And that is intercourse, and union, too,)
While, overcome with speechless gratitude,
And, with a holier love inspired, I looked
On her—at once superior to my woes
And partner of my loss.—O heavy change!
Dimness o'er this clear luminary crept
Insensibly;—the immortal and divine
Yielded to mortal reflux; her pure glory,
As from the pinnacle of worldly state
Wretched ambition drops astounded, fell

---

[1] 1845.
. . . on which . . . 1814.

* Wordsworth's own children, Catherine and Thomas, were removed by death, in a manner very similar to this, in June and December 1812, while they were living in the Grasmere Parsonage. Compare the two sonnets—

Surprised by joy—impatient as the Wind,
(1815)

and

Desponding Father! mark this altered bough,
(1835).—Ed.

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Into a gulf obscure of silent grief,
And keen heart-anguish—of itself ashamed,
Yet obstinately cherishing itself:
And, so consumed, she melted from my arms;
And left me, on this earth, disconsolate!

"What followed cannot be reviewed in thought;
Much less, retraced in words. If she, of life
Blameless, so intimate with love and joy
And all the tender motions of the soul,
Had been supplanted, could I hope to stand—
Infirm, dependent, and now destitute?
I called on dreams and visions, to disclose
That which is veiled from waking thought; conjured
Eternity, as men constrain a ghost
To appear and answer; to the grave I spake
Imploringly;—looked up, and asked the Heavens
If Angels traversed their cerulean floors,
If fixed or wandering star could tidings yield
Of the departed spirit—what abode
It occupies—what consciousness retains
Of former loves and interests. Then my soul
Turned inward,—to examine of what stuff
Time's fetters are composed; and life was put
To inquisition, long and profitless!
By pain of heart—now checked—and now impelled—
The intellectual power, through words and things,
Went sounding on, a dim and perilous way! *
And from those transports, and these toils abstruse,
Some trace am I enabled to retain
Of time, else lost;—existing unto me
Only by records in myself not found.

"From that abstraction I was roused,—and how?
Even as a thoughtful shepherd by a flash

* Compare *The Borderers*, act IV. ll. 124, 125 (see vol. i. p. 198)—

Three sleepless nights I passed in sounding on,
Through words and things, a dim and perilous way. ED.

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Of lightning startled in a gloomy cave
Of these wild hills. For, lo! the dread Bastile,*
With all the chambers in its horrid towers,
Fell to the ground:—by violence overthrown
Of indignation; and with shouts that drowned
The crash it made in falling! From the wreck
A golden palace rose, or seemed to rise,
The appointed seat of equitable law
And mild paternal sway. The potent shock
I felt: the transformation I perceived,
As marvellously seized as in that moment
When, from the blind mist issuing, I beheld
Glory—beyond all glory ever seen,
Confusion infinite of heaven and earth,
Dazzling the soul. Meanwhile, prophetic harps
In every grove were ringing, 'War shall cease;
'Did ye not hear that conquest is abjured?
'Bring garlands, bring forth choicest flowers, to deck
'The tree of Liberty.' †—My heart rebounded;
My melancholy voice the chorus joined;
—'Be joyful all ye nations; in all lands,
'Ye that are capable of joy be glad!
'Henceforth, whate'er is wanting to yourselves
'In others ye shall promptly find;—and all,
'Enriched by mutual and reflected wealth,
'Shall with one heart honour their common kind.'[1]

"Thus was I reconverted to the world;
Society became my glittering bride,
And airy hopes my children.—From the depths

[1] 1832.
"Be rich by mutual and reflected wealth." 1814.

* See *The Prelude*, book ix. l. 68 (vol. iii. p. 295).—Ed.

† During the American War of Independence, trees were planted as symbols of freedom. This custom passed over to France. The Jacobins planted the first tree of Liberty in Paris in 1790, and the practice spread rapidly. At each revolutionary period it was revived, and during the Empire again suppressed. A treatise has been written on the custom, by the Abbé Grégoire.—Ed.

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Of natural passion, seemingly escaped,
My soul diffused herself[1] in wide embrace
Of institutions, and the forms of things,
As they exist, in mutable array,
Upon life's surface. What, though in my veins
There flowed no Gallic blood, nor had I breathed
The air of France, not less than Gallic zeal
Kindled and burnt among the sapless twigs
Of my exhausted heart. If busy men
In sober conclave met, to weave a web
Of amity, whose living threads should stretch
Beyond the seas, and to the farthest pole,
There did I sit, assisting. If, with noise
And acclamation, crowds in open air
Expressed the tumult of their minds, my voice
There mingled, heard or not. The powers of song
I left not uninvoked; and, in still groves,
Where mild enthusiasts tuned a pensive lay
Of thanks and expectation, in accord
With their belief, I sang Saturnian rule
Returned,—a progeny of golden years
Permitted to descend, and bless mankind.
—With promises the Hebrew Scriptures teem:
I felt their[2] invitation; and resumed
A long-suspended office in the House
Of public worship, where, the glowing phrase
Of ancient inspiration serving me,
I promised also,—with undaunted trust
Foretold, and added prayer to prophecy;
The admiration winning of the crowd;
The help desiring of the pure devout.

"Scorn and contempt forbid me to proceed!
But History, time's slavish scribe, will tell

[1] 1827.
. . . . itself . . . 1814.

[2] 1840.
. . the . . . . . . 1814.

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How rapidly the zealots of the cause
Disbanded—or in hostile ranks appeared;
Some, tired of honest service; these, outdone,
Disgusted therefore, or appalled, by aims
Of fiercer zealots—so confusion reigned,
And the more faithful were compelled to exclaim,
As Brutus did to Virtue, 'Liberty,
I worshipped thee, and find thee but a Shade!' *

"Such recantation had for me no charm,
Nor would I bend to it; who should have grieved
At aught, however fair, that[1] bore the mien
Of a conclusion, or catastrophe.
Why then conceal, that, when the simply[2] good
In timid selfishness withdrew, I sought
Other support, not scrupulous whence it came;
And, by what compromise it stood, not nice?
Enough if notions seemed to be high-pitched,
And qualities determined.—Among men
So charactered did I maintain a strife[3]
Hopeless, and still more hopeless every hour;
But, in the process, I began to feel
That, if the emancipation of the world
Were missed, I should at least secure my own,
And be in part compensated. For rights,

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[1] 1827.
. . . . which . . . 1814.

[2] 1827.
. . . . . . simple . 1814.

[3] 1827.
And qualities determined.—Ruling such,
And with such herding, I maintained a strife 1814.

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* It is recorded by Dion Cassius (see *Dionis Cassii Cocceiani Historiarum Romanarum quae supersunt*, lib. xlvii. § 49) that Brutus before his death repeated this saying of Hercules,

O misera virtus, nomen inane. Te quidem
Ceu rem colebam; at serva tu Fortunae eras. ED.

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Widely—inveterately usurped upon,
I spake with vehemence; and promptly seized
All that[1] Abstraction furnished for my needs
Or purposes;* nor scrupled to proclaim,
And propagate, by liberty of life,
Those new persuasions. Not that I rejoiced,
Or even found pleasure, in such vagrant course,
For its own sake; but farthest from the walk
Which I had trod in happiness and peace,
Was most inviting to a troubled mind;
That, in a struggling and distempered world,
Saw a seductive image of herself.[2]
Yet, mark the contradictions of which Man
Is still the sport! Here Nature was my guide,
The Nature of the dissolute; but thee,
O fostering Nature! I rejected—smiled
At others' tears in pity; and in scorn
At those, which thy soft influence sometimes drew
From my unguarded heart.—The tranquil shores
Of Britain circumscribed me; else, perhaps
I might have been entangled among deeds,
Which, now, as infamous, I should abhor—
Despise, as senseless: for my spirit relished
Strangely the exasperation of that Land,
Which turned an angry beak against the down

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[1] 1836.
Whate'er . . . . 1814.

[2] 1827.
Beheld a cherished image of itself. 1814.
Beheld a seductive image of herself. MS.

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* "At the commencement of the French Revolution, in the remotest villages every tongue was employed in echoing and enforcing the almost geometrical abstractions of the physiocratic politicians and economists. The public roads were crowded with armed enthusiasts disputing on the inalienable sovereignty of the people, the imprescriptible laws of the pure reason, and the universal constitution, which, as rising out of the nature and rights of man as man, all nations alike were under the obligation of adopting."—S.T. Coleridge, *The Statesman's Manual, a Lay Sermon* (1816), p. 19.—Ed.

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Of her own breast; confounded into hope
Of disencumbering thus her fretful wings.[1]

"But all was quieted by iron bonds
Of military sway. The shifting aims,
The moral interests, the creative might,
The varied functions and high attributes
Of civil action, yielded to a power
Formal, and odious, and contemptible.
—In Britain, ruled a panic dread of change;
The weak were praised, rewarded, and advanced;
And, from the impulse of a just disdain,
Once more did I retire into myself.
There feeling no contentment, I resolved
To fly, for safeguard, to some foreign shore,
Remote from Europe; from her blasted hopes;
Her fields of carnage, and polluted air.

"Fresh blew the wind, when o'er the Atlantic Main
The ship went gliding with her thoughtless crew;
And who among them but an Exile, freed
From discontent, indifferent, pleased to sit
Among the busily-employed, not more
With obligation charged, with service taxed,
Than the loose pendant—to the idle wind
Upon the tall mast streaming. But, ye Powers
Of soul and sense mysteriously allied,
O, never let the Wretched, if a choice
Be left him, trust the freight of his distress
To a long voyage on the silent deep!
For, like a plague, will memory break out;
And, in the blank and solitude of things,

[1] 1827.

. . . . . for I strangely relished
The exasperated spirit of that Land,
Which turned an angry beak against the down
Of its own breast; as if it hoped, thereby,
To disencumber its impatient wings. 1814.

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Upon his spirit, with a fever's strength,
Will conscience prey.—Feebly must they have felt
Who, in old time, attired with snakes and whips
The vengeful Furies. *Beautiful* regards
Were turned on me—the face of her I loved;
The Wife and Mother pitifully fixing
Tender reproaches, insupportable!
Where now that boasted liberty? No welcome
From unknown objects I received; and those,
Known and familiar, which the vaulted sky
Did, in the placid clearness of the night,
Disclose, had accusations to prefer
Against my peace. Within the cabin stood
That volume—as a compass for the soul—
Revered among the nations. I implored
Its guidance; but the infallible support
Of faith was wanting. Tell me, why refused
To One by storms annoyed and adverse winds;
Perplexed with currents; of his weakness sick;
Of vain endeavours tired; and by his own,
And by his nature's, ignorance, dismayed!

"Long wished-for sight, the Western World appeared;
And, when the ship was moored, I leaped ashore
Indignantly—resolved to be a man,
Who, having o'er the past no power, would live
No longer in subjection to the past,
With abject mind—from a tyrannic lord
Inviting penance, fruitlessly endured:
So, like a fugitive, whose feet have cleared
Some boundary, which his followers may not cross
In prosecution of their deadly chase,
Respiring I looked round.—How bright the sun,
The breeze how soft! Can any thing produced[1]
In the old World compare, thought I, for power

[1] 1845.
How promising the Breeze! Can aught produced 1814.

And majesty with this gigantic stream,
Sprung from the desert ? * And behold a city
Fresh, youthful, and aspiring ! † What are these
To me, or I to them ? As much at least
As he desires that they should be, whom winds
And waves have wafted to this distant shore,
In the condition of a damaged seed,
Whose fibres cannot, if they would, take root.
Here may I roam at large ;—my business is,
Roaming at large, to observe, and not to feel
And, therefore, not to act—convinced that all
Which bears the name of action, howsoe'er
Beginning, ends in servitude—still painful,
And mostly profitless. And, sooth to say,
On nearer view, a motley spectacle
Appeared, of high pretensions—unreproved
But by the obstreperous voice of higher still ;
Big passions strutting on a petty stage ;
Which a detached spectator may regard
Not unamused.—But ridicule demands
Quick change of objects ; and, to laugh alone,
At a composing distance [1] from the haunts
Of strife and folly, though it be a treat
As choice as musing Leisure can bestow ;
Yet, in the very centre of the crowd,
To keep the secret of a poignant scorn,
Howe'er to airy Demons suitable,
Of all unsocial courses, is least fit [2]

---

[1] 1827.
. . . . . . and, to laugh alone,
In woods and wilds, or any lonely place,
At a composing distance . . . 1814.

[2] 1827.
May suit an airy Demon ; but, of all
Unsocial courses, 'tis the one least fit 1814.

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* The Hudson river, some of the sources of which rise in the Adirondack wilderness.—ED.
† New York.—ED.

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For the gross spirit of mankind,—the one
That soonest fails to please, and quickliest turns
Into vexation.
"Let us, then, I said,
Leave this unknit Republic to the scourge
Of her[1] own passions; and to regions haste,
Whose shades have never felt the encroaching axe,
Or soil endured a transfer in the mart
Of dire rapacity. There, Man abides,
Primeval Nature's child. A creature weak
In combination, (wherefore else driven back
So far, and of his old inheritance
So easily deprived?) but, for that cause,
More dignified, and stronger in himself;
Whether to act, judge, suffer, or enjoy.
True, the intelligence of social art
Hath overpowered his forefathers, and soon
Will sweep the remnant of his line away;
But contemplations, worthier, nobler far
Than her destructive energies, attend
His independence, when along the side
Of Mississippi, or that northern stream *
That[2] spreads into successive seas,† he walks;
Pleased to perceive his own unshackled life,
And his innate capacities of soul,
There imaged: or when, having gained the top
Of some commanding eminence, which yet
Intruder ne'er beheld, he thence surveys
Regions of wood and wide savannah, vast
Expanse of unappropriated earth,
With mind that sheds a light on what he sees;

[1] 1827.
. its . . . . 1814.

[2] 1827.
Which . . . . 1814.

* See Wordsworth's note, p. 386.—Ed.
† The St. Lawrence.—Ed.

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Free as the sun, and lonely as the sun,
Pouring above his head its radiance down
Upon a living and rejoicing world!

"So, westward, tow'rd the unviolated woods
I bent my way; and, roaming far and wide,
Failed not to greet the merry Mocking-bird; *
And, while the melancholy Muccawiss
(The sportive bird's companion in the grove)
Repeated, o'er and o'er, his plaintive cry, †

* "The Mocking Bird (*Turdus polyglottus*, Linn.), the American nightingale. He has a voice full, strong, and musical, and capable of almost every modulation, from the clear mellow tones of the Wood Thrush, to the savage scream of the Bald Eagle. In measure and accent he faithfully follows his originals. In force and sweetness of expression he greatly improves upon them. In his native groves, his song rises pre-eminent over every competitor. Neither is his strain altogether imitative. His notes are bold and full, and varied seemingly beyond all limits. They consist of short expressions of two, three, or, at the most, five or six syllables; generally interspersed with imitations, and all of them uttered with great emphasis and rapidity, and continued with undiminished ardour for half an hour, or an hour at a time."—*American Ornithology*, by Wilson, Bonaparte, and Jardine, vol. i. p. 164, etc.—Ed.

† I was indebted to Mr. Edward B. Tylor, and also to the Rev. Charles M. Addison, of Arlington, Mass., for identifying the "melancholy Muccawiss" as the Whip-poor-will (*Caprimulgus vociferus*, or *Antrostomus vociferus*). "Their melancholy night song has led some Indians to consider them the souls of ancestors killed in battle."—Mr. Tylor. For letters in reference to the Muccawiss, see Note C in the Appendix to this volume, p. 393; and compare Charles Waterton's *Wanderings in South America*, etc. etc. (1828), and Wordsworth's poem, *A Morning Exercise*, written in 1828.

Since Messrs. Tylor, Addison, and Col. Trumbull identified the Muccawiss with the Whip-poor-will, I have had access to the original MSS. of *The Excursion;* and have found that the point which is discussed—in the above note and in Note C in the Appendix—is set conclusively at rest, by one of the earlier (discarded) readings of the text in Wordsworth's own handwriting.

"and verily was cheered
By the blithe Mocking Bird, and heard alone
The melancholy cry of whip-pow-will."

Another version of the last line is also given,

"The plaintive cry repeated whip-poor-will."

I entertain no doubt that Wordsworth first of all met with the name of this bird, whip-pow-will, in Waterton's *Wanderings* (a copy of which he possessed), and that he afterwards exchanged it—before sending his *Excursion* to press, in 1814—for the more musical Indian name, Muccawiss.

It is also worthy of note that Southey had transferred to his *Commonplace Book* (see vol. ii. p. 567), Carver's account of the Whipper-will, or as it is termed by the Indians, Muckawiss. "As soon as night comes on these birds

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I sympathised at leisure with the sound;
But that pure archetype of human greatness,
I found him not. There, in his stead, appeared
A creature, squalid, vengeful, and impure;
Remorseless, and submissive to no law
But superstitious fear, and abject sloth.

"Enough is told! Here am I—ye have heard
What evidence I seek, and vainly seek;
What from my fellow-beings I require,
And either they have not to give, or I
Lack virtue to receive; what I myself,
Too oft by wilful forfeiture, have lost[1]
Nor can regain. How languidly I look
Upon this visible fabric of the world,
May be divined—perhaps it hath been said:—
But spare your pity, if there be in me
Aught that deserves respect: for I exist,
Within myself, not comfortless.—The tenour
Which my life holds, he readily may conceive
Whoe'er hath stood to watch a mountain brook
In some still passage of its course, and seen,
Within the depths of its capacious breast,
Inverted trees, rocks, clouds, and azure sky;[2]
And, on its glassy surface, specks of foam,
And conglobated bubbles undissolved,
Numerous as stars; that, by their onward lapse,
Betray to sight the motion of the stream,
Else imperceptible. Meanwhile, is heard

[1] 1845.
. . . . . . I require,
And cannot find; what I myself have lost, 1814.

[2] 1836.
Inverted trees, and rocks, and azure sky; 1814.

will place themselves on the fences, stumps, or stones that lie near some house, and repeat their melancholy note without any variation till midnight." (*Travels*, by Jonathan Carver, p. 467.)—Ed.

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A softened roar, or murmur;[1] and the sound
Though soothing, and the little floating isles
Though beautiful, are both by Nature charged
With the same pensive office; and make known
Through what perplexing labyrinths, abrupt
Precipitations, and untoward straits,
The earth-born wanderer hath passed; and quickly,
That respite o'er, like traverses and toils
Must he again encounter.[2]—Such a stream
Is human Life; and so the Spirit fares
In the best quiet to her[3] course allowed;
And such is mine,—save only for a hope
That my particular current soon will reach
The unfathomable gulf, where all is still!"

Book Fourth

DESPONDENCY CORRECTED

ARGUMENT

State of feeling produced by the foregoing Narrative—A belief in a superintending Providence the only adequate support under affliction—Wanderer's ejaculation[4]*—Acknowledges*

---

[1] 1836.
Perchance, a roar or murmur; . . . . 1814.
A softened roar, a murmur; . . . . 1827.
. . . . Meanwhile, a roar
Is heard or soften'd murmur; . . . . MS.

[2] 1845.
Must be again encountered.— . . . . 1814.

[3] 1836.
. . . . . . its . . . . 1814.

[4] 1827.
Wanderer's ejaculation to the supreme Being— 1814.
1836.
Account of his own devotional feelings in youth involved in it— 1814.

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the difficulty of a lively faith—Hence immoderate sorrow[1] *—Exhortations—How received—Wanderer applies*[2] *his discourse to that other cause of dejection in the Solitary's mind—Disappointment from*[3] *the French Revolution—States grounds*[4] *of hope, and insists*[5] *on the necessity of patience and fortitude with respect to the course of great revolutions*[6]*—Knowledge the source of tranquillity—Rural Solitude favourable to*[7] *knowledge of the inferior Creatures; Study of their habits and ways recommended;*[8] *exhortation*

---

account of his own devotional feelings in youth involved— 1827.

1827.
Implores that he may retain in age the power to find repose among enduring and eternal things— 1814.
What he wishes for in age— MS.

1827.
What these latter are— 1814.

[1] 1836.
sorrow—but doubt or despondence not therefore to be inferred— 1814.
sorrow—doubt 1827.

1836.
And proceeds to administer consolation to the Solitary— 1814.
Consolation to the Solitary— 1827.
Consolation administered to the Solitary— MS.

[2] 1827.
How these are received—Wanderer resumes—and applies 1814.

[3] 1827.
—the disappointment of his expectations from 1814.

[4] 1827.
States the rational grounds 1814.

[5] 1814.
hope—insists 1827.
The text of 1836 returns to that of 1814.

[6] 1827.
to the great revolutions of the world— 1814.

[7] 1827.
Rural life and Solitude particularly favourable to a 1814.

[8] 1827.
recommended for its influence on the affections and the imagination— 1814.

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to bodily exertion and communion[1] *with Nature—Morbid Solitude pitiable*[2]*—Superstition better than apathy—Apathy and destitution unknown in the infancy of society—The various modes of Religion prevented it—Illustrated*[3] *in the Jewish, Persian, Babylonian, Chaldean, and Grecian modes of belief—Solitary interposes—Wanderer*[4] *points out the influence of religious and imaginative feeling in the humble ranks of society, illustrated*[5] *from present and past times—These principles*[6] *tend to recal exploded superstitions and popery—Wanderer rebuts this charge, and contrasts the dignities of the Imagination with the presumptuous*[7] *littleness of certain modern Philosophers—Recommends*[8] *other lights and guides—Asserts the power of the Soul to regenerate herself; Solitary asks how*[9]*—Reply—Personal appeal*[10]*—*

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[1] 1827.
and an active Communion 1814.

[2] 1827.
a pitiable thing—If the elevated imagination cannot be exerted—try the humbler fancy— 1814.

[3] 1827.
—this illustrated 1814.

[4] 1827.
Wanderer, in answer, 1814.

[5] 1827.
feeling on the mind in the humble ranks of society, in rural life especially—This illustrated 1814.

[6] 1827.
Observation that these principles 1814.

[7] 1845.
presumptive 1814.
The text of 1847 reverts to that of 1814.

[8] 1827.
Philosophers, whom the Solitary appears to esteem—Recommends to him 1814.

Recommends to the Solitary— MS.

[9] 1827.
Solitary agitated, and asks how— 1814.

[10] 1836.
Happy for us that the imagination and affections in our own despite mitigate the evils of that state of intellectual

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Exhortation to activity of body renewed—How to commune with Nature—Wanderer concludes with a[1] *legitimate union of the imagination, affections, understanding, and reason*[2] *—Effect of his discourse*[3]*—Evening; return to the Cottage.*

HERE closed the Tenant of that lonely vale
His mournful narrative—commenced in pain,
In pain commenced, and ended without peace:
Yet tempered, not unfrequently, with strains
Of native feeling, grateful to our minds;
And yielding surely[4] some relief to his,
While we sate listening with compassion due.
A pause of silence followed; then, with voice
That did not falter though the heart was moved,[5]
The Wanderer said:—
"One adequate support
For the calamities of mortal life
Exists—one only; an assured belief

Slavery which the calculating understanding is so apt to produce— 1814.

is apt to MS.

Happy that the imagination and the affections mitigate the evils of that intellectual slavery which the calculating understanding is apt to produce— 1827.

1 1827.
How Nature is to be communed with — Wanderer concludes with a prospect of a 1814.

2 1827.
the affections, the understanding, and the reason— 1814.

3 1827.
Effect of the Wanderer's discourse— 1814.

4 1845.
And doubtless yielding . . . . . 1814.

5 1845.
Such pity yet surviving, with firm voice,
That did not falter though the heart was moved, 1814.

Such pity yet surviving, with clear voice
That falter'd not, albeit the heart was moved, 1836.

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That the procession of our fate, howe'er
Sad or disturbed, is ordered by a Being
Of infinite benevolence and power;
Whose everlasting purposes embrace
All accidents, converting them to good.
—The darts of anguish *fix* not where the seat
Of suffering hath been thoroughly fortified
By acquiescence in the Will supreme
For time and for eternity; by faith,
Faith absolute in God, including hope,
And the defence that lies in boundless love
Of his perfections; with habitual dread
Of aught unworthily conceived, endured
Impatiently, ill-done, or left undone,
To the dishonour of his holy name.
Soul of our Souls, and safeguard of the world!
Sustain, thou only canst, the sick of heart;
Restore their languid spirits, and recal
Their lost affections unto thee and thine!" *

Then, as we issued from that covert nook,
He thus continued, lifting up his eyes
To heaven:—"How beautiful this dome of sky;
And the vast hills, in fluctuation fixed
At thy command, how awful! Shall the Soul,
Human and rational, report of thee
Even less than these?—Be mute who will, who can,
Yet I will praise thee with impassioned voice:
My lips, that may forgot thee in the crowd,
Cannot forget thee here; where thou hast built,
For thy own glory, in the wilderness!
Me didst thou constitute a priest of thine,

* In January 1849, the year before Wordsworth's death, he was asked by Mr. Francis C. Yarnall of Philadelphia for his autograph, for a lady in America; and, in reply, he wrote the four lines, beginning

Soul of our Souls, and safeguard of the world!

They were doubtless suggested to him at the time by the death of his own daughter. See Mr. Yarnall's paper on "Wordsworth's Influence in America," in the *Transactions of the Wordsworth Society*, No. v.—Ed.

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In such a temple as we now behold
Reared for thy presence: therefore, am I bound
To worship, here, and every where—as one
Not doomed to ignorance, though forced to tread,
From childhood up, the ways of poverty;
From unreflecting ignorance preserved,
And from debasement rescued.—By thy grace
The particle divine remained unquenched;
And, 'mid the wild weeds of a rugged soil,
Thy bounty caused to flourish deathless flowers,
From paradise transplanted: wintry age
Impends; the frost will gather round my heart;
If the flowers wither,[1] I am worse than dead!
—Come, labour, when the worn-out frame requires
Perpetual sabbath; come, disease and want;
And sad exclusion through decay of sense;
But leave me unabated trust in thee—
And let thy favour, to the end of life,
Inspire me with ability to seek
Repose and hope among eternal things—
Father of heaven and earth! and I am rich,
And will possess my portion in content!

"And what are things eternal?—powers depart,"
The grey-haired Wanderer stedfastly replied,
Answering the question which himself had asked,
"Possessions vanish, and opinions change,
And passions hold a fluctuating seat:
But, by the storms of circumstance unshaken,
And subject neither to eclipse nor[2] wane,
Duty exists;—immutably survive,
For cur support, the measures and the forms,
Which an abstract intelligence supplies;

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[1] 1836.
And, if they wither, ... 1814.

[2] 1827.
. . . . or . 1814.

Whose kingdom is, where time and space are not.*
Of other converse which mind, soul, and heart,
Do, with united urgency, require,
What more that may not perish?—Thou, dread source,
Prime, self-existing cause and end of all
That in the scale of being fill their place;
Above our human region, or below,
Set and sustained;—thou, who didst wrap the cloud
Of infancy around us, that thyself,
Therein, with our simplicity awhile
Might'st hold, on earth, communion undisturbed; †
Who from the anarchy of dreaming sleep,
Or from its death-like void, with punctual care,
And touch as gentle as the morning light,
Restor'st us, daily, to the powers of sense
And reason's stedfast rule—thou, thou alone
Art everlasting, and the blessed Spirits,
Which thou includest, as the sea her waves:
For adoration thou endur'st; endure
For consciousness the motions of thy will;
For apprehension those transcendent truths
Of the pure intellect, that stand as laws
(Submission constituting strength and power)
Even to thy Being's infinite majesty!
This universe shall pass away—a work[1]
Glorious! because the shadow of thy might,
A step, or link, for intercourse with thee.
Ah! if the time must come, in which my feet
No more shall stray where meditation leads,
By flowing stream, through wood, or craggy wild,
Loved haunts like these; the unimprisoned Mind

[1] 1827.
. . . . frame 1814.

* With this whole passage compare the teaching of Kant's three *Kritiken*.—Ed.

† Compare the *Ode*, *Intimations of Immortality*—

Trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home. Ed.

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May yet have scope to range among her own,
Her thoughts, her images, her high desires.
If the dear faculty of sight should fail,
Still, it may be allowed me to remember
What visionary powers of eye and soul
In youth were mine; when, stationed on the top
Of some huge hill—expectant, I beheld
The sun rise up,* from distant climes returned
Darkness to chase, and sleep; and bring the day
His bounteous gift! or saw him toward the deep [1]
Sink, with a retinue of flaming clouds
Attended; then, my spirit was entranced
With joy exalted to beatitude; †
The measure of my soul was filled with bliss,
And holiest love; as earth, sea, air, with light,
With pomp, with glory, with magnificence!

"Those fervent raptures are for ever flown; ‡
And, since their date, my soul hath undergone
Change manifold, for better or for worse:
Yet cease I not to struggle, and aspire [2]
Heavenward; and chide the part of me that flags,
Through sinful choice; or dread necessity
On human nature from above imposed.
'Tis, by comparison, an easy task
Earth to despise; § but, to converse with heaven—

[1] 1827.
. . . . . . tow'rds the Deep 1814.

[2] 1827.
. . . . . . and to aspire 1814.

* Compare book i. l. 200.—Ed.

† Compare book i. ll. 215-16.—Ed.

‡ Compare *Lines composed a few miles above Tintern Abbey*, ll. 83-85 (vol. ii. p. 54)—

That time is past,
And all its aching joys are now no more,
And all its dizzy raptures. Ed.

§ See Matthew Sylvester's *Reliquiæ Baxterianæ, or the Life of Richard Baxter*, book i. part i. l. 213, p. 32: "To despise earth is easy to me; but not so easy to be acquainted and conversant in Heaven. I have nothing in this world which I could not easily let go: but to get satisfying apprehension of the other world is the great and grievous difficulty."
See also Wordsworth's note, p. 387.—Ed.

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This is not easy:—to relinquish all
We have, or hope, of happiness and joy,
And stand in freedom loosened from this world,
I deem not arduous; but must needs confess
That 'tis a thing impossible to frame
Conceptions equal to the soul's desires;
And the most difficult of tasks to *keep*
Heights which the soul is competent to gain.
—Man is of dust: ethereal hopes are his,
Which, when they should sustain themselves aloft,
Want due consistence; like a pillar of smoke,
That with majestic energy from earth
Rises; but, having reached the thinner air,
Melts, and dissolves, and is no longer seen.
From this infirmity of mortal kind
Sorrow proceeds, which else were not; at least,
If grief be something hallowed and ordained,
If, in proportion, it be just and meet,
Yet, through this weakness of the general heart,
Is it enabled to maintain its hold[1]
In that excess which conscience disapproves.
For who could sink and settle to that point
Of selfishness; so senseless who could be
As long[2] and perseveringly to mourn
For any object of his love, removed
From this unstable world, if he could fix
A satisfying view upon that state
Of pure, imperishable, blessedness,
Which reason promises, and holy writ
Ensures to all believers?—Yet mistrust

[1] 1836.

. . . . . it be just and meet,
Through this, 'tis able to maintain its hold, 1814.

[2] 1827.

. . . so senseless who could be
In framing estimates of loss and gain,
As long . . . . 1814.
In making estimates . . . . MS.

Is of such incapacity, methinks,
No natural branch; despondency far less;[1]
And, least of all, is absolute despair.[2]
—And, if there be whose tender frames have drooped
Even to the dust; apparently, through weight
Of anguish unrelieved, and lack of power
An agonizing sorrow to transmute;
Deem not that proof is here of hope withheld[3]
When wanted most; a confidence impaired
So pitiably, that, having ceased to see
With bodily eyes, they are borne down by love
Of what is lost, and perish through regret.
Oh! no, the innocent Sufferer often sees[4]
Too clearly; feels too vividly; and longs
To realize the vision, with intense
And over-constant yearning;—there—there lies
The excess, by which the balance is destroyed.
Too, too contracted are these walls of flesh,
This vital warmth too cold, these visual orbs,
Though inconceivably endowed, too dim
For any passion of the soul that leads
To ecstasy; and, all the crooked paths
Of time and change disdaining, takes its course
Along the line of limitless desires.
I, speaking now from such disorder free,
Nor rapt, nor craving, but in settled peace,
I cannot doubt that they whom you deplore
Are glorified; or, if they sleep, shall wake
From sleep, and dwell with God in endless love.
Hope, below this, consists not with belief

---

[1] 1836.
. . . . less. 1814.

[2] This line was added in 1836.

[3] 1836.
Infer not hence a hope from those withheld 1814.

[4] 1836.
Oh! no, full oft the innocent Sufferer sees 1814.

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In mercy, carried infinite degrees
Beyond the tenderness of human hearts:
Hope, below this, consists not with belief
In perfect wisdom, guiding mightiest power,
That finds no limits but her own pure will.[1]

"Here then we rest; not fearing for our creed
The worst that human reasoning can achieve,
To unsettle or perplex it:[2] yet with pain
Acknowledging, and grievous self-reproach,
That, though immovably convinced, we want
Zeal, and the virtue to exist by faith
As soldiers live by courage; as, by strength
Of heart, the sailor fights with roaring seas.
Alas! the endowment of immortal power
Is matched unequally with custom, time,*
And domineering faculties of sense
In *all;* in most with superadded foes,
Idle temptations; open vanities,
Ephemeral offspring[3] of the unblushing world;
And, in the private regions of the mind,
Ill-governed passions, ranklings of despite,
Immoderate wishes, pining discontent,
Distress and care. What then remains?—To seek
Those helps for his occasions ever near

[1] 1827.
. . . . . . its own pure Will. 1814.

[2] 1827.
Here then we rest: not fearing to be left
In undisturbed possession of our creed
For aught that human reasoning can achieve,
To unsettle or perplex us: . . . 1814.

[3] 1827.
. . . . . . open vanities
Of dissipation; countless, still-renewed,
Ephemeral offspring . . . . 1814.

* See Wordsworth's note, p. 387.—Ed.

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Who lacks not will to use them ; vows, renewed
On the first motion of a holy thought ;
Vigils of contemplation ; praise ; and prayer—
A stream, which, from the fountain of the heart
Issuing, however feebly, nowhere flows
Without access of unexpected strength.
But, above all, the victory is most sure
For him, who, seeking faith by virtue, strives
To yield entire submission to the law
Of conscience—conscience reverenced and obeyed,
As God's most intimate presence in the soul,
And his most perfect image in the world.
—Endeavour thus to live ; these rules regard ;
These helps solicit ; and a stedfast seat
Shall then be yours among the happy few
Who dwell on earth, yet breathe empyreal air,
Sons of the morning.* For your nobler part,
Ere disencumbered of her mortal chains,
Doubt shall be quelled and trouble chased away ;
With only such degree of sadness left
As may support longings of pure desire ;
And strengthen love, rejoicing secretly
In the sublime attractions of the grave."

While, in this strain, the venerable Sage
Poured forth his aspirations, and announced
His judgments, near that lonely house we paced
A plot of green-sward, seemingly preserved
By nature's care from wreck of scattered stones,
And from encroachment [1] of encircling heath :
Small space ! but, for reiterated steps,
Smooth and commodious ; as a stately deck
Which to and fro the mariner is used
To tread for pastime, talking with his mates,

[1] 1827.
And from the encroachment . . . . 1814.

* Compare Milton's *Ode on the Nativity*, l. 119.—Ed.

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Or haply thinking of far-distant friends,
While the ship glides before a steady breeze.
Stillness prevailed around us: and the voice
That spake was capable to lift the soul
Toward[1] regions yet more tranquil. But, methought,
That he, whose fixed despondency had given
Impulse and motive to that strong discourse,
Was less upraised in spirit than abashed;
Shrinking from admonition, like a man
Who feels that to exhort is to reproach.
Yet not to be diverted from his aim,
The Sage continued:—
"For that other loss,
The loss of confidence in social man,
By the unexpected transports of our age
Carried so high, that every thought, which looked
Beyond the temporal destiny of the Kind,
To many seemed superfluous—as, no cause
Could e'er for such exalted confidence[2]
Exist; so, none is now for fixed[3] despair:
The two extremes are equally disowned
By reason: if, with sharp recoil, from one
You have been driven far as its opposite,
Between them seek the point whereon to build
Sound expectations. So doth he advise[4]

---

[1] 1827.
Tow'rds . . . . 1814.

[2] 1845.
For such exalted confidence could e'er . 1814.

[3] 1827.
. . . . such 1814.

[4] 1827.
The two extremes are equally remote
From Truth and Reason;—do not, then, confound
One with the other, but reject them both;
And choose the middle point, whereon to build
Sound expectations. This doth he advise 1814.
. . . . despair
Tho' transcient sadness were as natural

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Who shared at first the illusion; but was soon
Cast from the pedestal of pride by shocks
Which Nature gently gave, in woods and fields;
Nor unreproved by Providence, thus speaking
To the inattentive children of the world:
'Vain-glorious Generation! what new powers
'On you have been conferred? what gifts, withheld
'From your progenitors, have ye received,
'Fit recompense of new desert? what claim
'Are ye prepared to urge, that my decrees
'For you should undergo a sudden change;
'And the weak functions of one busy day,
'Reclaiming and extirpating, perform
'What all the slowly-moving years of time,
'With their united force, have left undone?
'By nature's gradual processes be taught;
'By story be confounded! Ye aspire
'Rashly, to fall once more; and that false fruit,
'Which, to your over-weening spirits, yields
'Hope of a flight celestial, will produce [1]
'Misery and shame. But Wisdom of her sons
'Shall not the less, though late, be justified.' *

"Such timely warning," said the Wanderer, "gave
That visionary voice; and, at this day,
When a Tartarean darkness overspreads
The groaning nations; when the impious rule,
By will or by established ordinance,
Their own dire agents, and constrain the good
To acts which they abhor; though I bewail

As that a cloud albeit silver bright
Should fling yon dark spot on the mountain side.
Forced by sharp recoil from one extreme MS.

[1] 1814.
Which to your over-weening spirits feeds
Hope of a godlike flight, . . . C.

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* St. Matt. xi. 19.—ED.

This triumph, yet the pity of my heart
Prevents me not from owning, that the law,
By which mankind now suffers, is most just.
For by superior energies; more strict
Affiance in each other; faith more firm
In their unhallowed principles; the bad
Have fairly earned a victory o'er the weak,
The vacillating, inconsistent good.
Therefore, not unconsoled, I wait—in hope
To see the moment, when the righteous cause
Shall gain defenders zealous and devout
As they who have opposed her; in which Virtue
Will, to her efforts, tolerate no bounds
That are not lofty as her rights; aspiring
By impulse of her own ethereal zeal.
That spirit only can redeem mankind;
And when that sacred spirit shall appear,
Then shall *our* triumph be complete as theirs.
Yet, should this confidence prove vain, the wise
Have still the keeping of their proper peace;
Are guardians of their own tranquillity.
They act, or they recede, observe, and feel;
'Knowing[1] the heart of man is set to be *
The centre of this world, about the which
Those revolutions of disturbances
Still roll; where all the aspècts of misery
Predominate; whose strong effects are such
As he must bear, being powerless to redress;
And that unless above himself he can
Erect himself, how poor a thing is Man!' †

[1] 1827.
"Knowing"—(to adopt the energetic words
Which a time-hallowed Poet hath employed)
"Knowing . . . . 1814.

* See Wordsworth's note, p. 387.—Ed.
† Samuel Daniel; from his poem, *To the Lady Margaret, Countess of Cumberland*. In his note Wordsworth says, "The two last lines printed in italics, are by him" (*i.e.* Daniel) "translated from Seneca." The passage

"Happy is he who lives to understand,
Not human nature only, but explores
All natures,—to the end that he may find
The law that governs each; and where begins
The union, the partition where, that makes
Kind and degree, among all visible Beings;
The constitutions, powers, and faculties,
Which they inherit,—cannot step beyond,—
And cannot fall beneath; that do assign
To every class its station and its office,
Through all the mighty commonwealth of things
Up from the creeping plant to sovereign Man.
Such converse, if directed by a meek,
Sincere, and humble spirit, teaches love:
For knowledge is delight; and such delight
Breeds love: yet, suited as it rather is
To thought and to the climbing intellect,
It teaches less to love, than to adore;
If that be not indeed the highest love!"

"Yet," said I, tempted here to interpose,
"The dignity of life is not impaired
By aught that innocently satisfies
The humbler cravings of the heart; and he
Is a still happier man, who, for those heights
Of speculation not unfit, descends;
And such benign affections cultivates
Among the inferior kinds; not merely those
That he may call his own, and which depend,

---

is: "O quam contempta res est homo, nisi supra humana surrexerit" (*Natur. quaest.* lib. i. praef. 4). The discovery of this passage cost the late Bishop of St. Andrews several long days' hunting through Seneca's works. He wrote me afterwards: "The passage has nothing to do with moral elevation, the next words are 'quam diu cum affectibus colluctamur quid magnifici facimus.'"

The following occurs in *The Soul's Conflict*, by Richard Sibbes (1635), ch. ix.—"We see likewise hence a necessity of having something in the soul above itself. It must be partaker of a diviner nature than itself; otherwise, when the most refined part of our souls, the very spirit of our minds, is out of frame, what shall bring it in again?" See also the extract from Bacon's Essay, XVI., prefixed to *The White Doe of Rylstone* (vol. iv. p. 105).—ED.

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As individual objects of regard,
Upon his care, from whom he also looks
For signs and tokens of a mutual bond;
But others, far beyond this narrow sphere,
Whom, for the very sake of love, he loves.
Nor is it a mean praise of rural life
And solitude, that they do favour most,
Most frequently call forth, and best sustain,
These pure sensations; that can penetrate
The obstreperous city; on the barren seas
Are not unfelt; and much might recommend,
How much they might inspirit and endear,
The loneliness of this sublime retreat!"

"Yes," said the Sage, resuming the discourse
Again directed to his downcast Friend,
"If, with the froward will and grovelling soul
Of man, offended, liberty is here,
And invitation every hour renewed,
To mark *their* placid state, who never heard
Of a command which they have power to break,
Or rule which they are tempted to transgress:
These, with a soothed or elevated heart,
May we behold; their knowledge register;
Observe their ways; and, free from envy, find
Complacence there:—but wherefore this to you?
I guess that, welcome to your lonely hearth,
The redbreast, ruffled up by winter's cold
Into a 'feathery bunch,' feeds at your hand:[1]
A box, perchance, is from your casement hung
For the small wren to build in;—not in vain,
The barriers disregarding that surround
This deep abiding place, before your sight
Mounts on the breeze the butterfly; and soars,
Small creature as she is, from earth's bright flowers,

[1] 1836.
The Redbreast feeds in winter from your hand; 1814.

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Into the dewy clouds. Ambition reigns
In the waste wilderness: the Soul ascends
Drawn towards her native firmament of heaven,[1]
When the fresh eagle, in the month of May,
Upborne, at evening, on replenished wing,
This shaded valley leaves;[2] * and leaves the dark
Empurpled hills, conspicuously renewing
A proud communication with the sun
Low sunk beneath the horizon!—List!—I heard,
From yon huge breast of rock, a voice sent forth[3]
As if the visible mountain made the cry.
Again!"—The effect upon the soul was such
As he expressed: from out the mountain's heart
The solemn voice appeared to issue, startling
The blank air—for the region all around
Stood empty of all shape of life, and silent
Save for that single cry, the unanswer'd bleat
Of a poor lamb—left somewhere to itself,[4]

---

[1] 1836.
Towards her native firmament of heaven, 1814.

[2] 1820.
This shady valley leaves,— . . . . . 1814.

[3] 1845.
. . . . a solemn bleat;
Sent forth as if it were the Mountain's voice, 1814.

[4] 1845.
As he expressed; for, from the mountain's heart
The solemn bleat appeared to come; there was
No other—and the region all around
Stood silent, empty of all shape of life.
—It was a Lamb—left somewhere to itself, 1814.

As he expressed; from out the mountain's heart
The solemn bleat appeared to issue, startling
The blank air—for the region all around
Stood silent, empty of all shape of life: 1827.

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* The fact of the eagle having once haunted the Cumbrian and Westmoreland valleys is proved by the number of rocks, crags, etc., that are named from it.—Ed.

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The plaintive spirit of the solitude!*
He paused, as if unwilling to proceed,
Through consciousness that silence in such place
Was best, the most affecting eloquence.
But soon his thoughts returned upon themselves,
And, in soft tone of speech, thus he[1] resumed.

"Ah! if the heart, too confidently raised,
Perchance too lightly occupied, or lulled
Too easily, despise or overlook
The vassalage that binds her to the earth,
Her sad dependence upon time, and all
The trepidations of mortality,
What place so destitute and void—but there
The little flower her vanity shall check;
The trailing worm reprove her thoughtless pride?

"These craggy regions, these chaotic wilds,
Does that benignity pervade, that warms
The mole contented with her darksome walk
In the cold ground; and to the emmet gives
Her foresight, and intelligence[2] that makes
The tiny creatures strong by social league;

As he described, the regions all around
Stood silent, empty of all shape of life.
And from the mountain's stony heart the voice
Appeared to come, though but the unanswered bleat C.

Again! in the surrounding vacancy
The effect upon the soul was . . C.

[1] 1836.
. . . . he thus . 1814.

[2] 1827.
Her foresight; and the intelligence . . 1814.

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* The following occurs in the Fenwick note to the lines addressed *To Joanna* in the "Poems on the naming of Places" (vol. ii. p. 157): "The effect of the reverberation of voices in some parts of the mountains is very striking. There is, in *The Excursion*, an allusion to the bleat of a lamb thus re-echoed, and described without any exaggeration, as I heard it, on the side of Stickle Tarn, from the precipice that stretches on to Langdale Pikes." The "precipice" referred to is Pavy Ark.—Ed.

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Supports the generations, multiplies
Their tribes, till we behold a spacious plain
Or grassy bottom, all, with little hills—
Their labour, covered, as a lake with waves; *
Thousands of cities, in the desert place
Built up of life, and food, and means of life!
Nor wanting here, to entertain the thought,
Creatures that in communities exist,
Less, as might seem, for general guardianship
Or through dependence upon mutual aid,
Than by participation of delight
And a strict love of fellowship, combined.
What other spirit can it be that prompts
The gilded summer flies to mix and weave
Their sports together in the solar beam,
Or in the gloom of twilight hum their joy?
More obviously the self-same influence rules
The feathered kinds; the fieldfare's pensive flock,[1]†
The cawing rooks, and sea-mews from afar,
Hovering above these inland solitudes,
By the rough wind unscattered, at whose call
Up through the trenches of the long-drawn vales
Their voyage was begun: [2] nor is its power

---

[1] 1827.
. . . . flocks, 1814.

[2] 1836.
Unscattered by the wind, at whose loud call
Their voyage was begun: . . . . 1814.

By the rough wind unscattered, at whose call
Their voyage was begun: . . . . 1827.

Their voyage they began: . . . . C.

---

* There are many ant-hills in this district of Westmoreland. Note that the description here is of the effect of a lake seen from above, looking down on it.—Ed.

† The fieldfares have a habit of settling together, and sitting perfectly still, till they are disturbed; when they fly off, and settling again, sit silently as before.—Ed.

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Unfelt among the sedentary fowl
That seek yon pool,* and there prolong their stay
In silent congress; or together roused
Take flight; while with their clang the air resounds.
And, over all, in that ethereal vault,[1]
Is the mute company of changeful clouds;
Bright apparition, suddenly put forth,
The rainbow smiling on the faded storm;
The mild assemblage of the starry heavens;
And the great sun, earth's universal lord!

"How bountiful is Nature! he shall find
Who seeks not; and to him, who hath not asked,
Large measure shall be dealt. Three sabbath-days
Are scarcely told, since, on a service bent
Of mere humanity, you clomb those heights;
And what a marvellous and heavenly show
Was suddenly revealed![2]—the swains moved on,
And heeded not: you lingered, you perceived
And felt, deeply as living man could feel.
There is a luxury[3] in self-dispraise;
And inward self-disparagement affords
To meditative spleen a grateful feast.
Trust me, pronouncing on your own desert,
You judge unthankfully: distempered nerves
Infect the thoughts: the languor of the frame
Depresses the soul's vigour. Quit your couch—
Cleave not so fondly to your moody cell;
Nor let the hallowed powers, that shed from heaven

---

[1] 1832.
. . . . . . etherial arch 1814.

[2] 1836.
Was to your sight revealed! . . . . 1814.

[3] 1836.
. . . . . . and perceived.
There is a luxury . . . . . . 1814.

---

* Blea Tarn.—Ed.

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Stillness and rest, with disapproving eye
Look down upon your taper, through a watch
Of midnight hours, unseasonably twinkling
In this deep Hollow, like a sullen star
Dimly reflected in a lonely pool.
Take courage, and withdraw yourself from ways
That run not parallel to nature's course.
Rise with the lark! your matins shall obtain
Grace, be their composition what it may,
If but with hers performed; * climb once again,
Climb every day, those ramparts; † meet the breeze
Upon their tops, adventurous as a bee
That from your garden thither soars, to feed
On new-blown heath; let yon commanding rock
Be your frequented watch-tower; roll the stone
In thunder down the mountains; with all your might
Chase the wild goat; and if the bold red deer
Fly to those [1] harbours, driven by hound and horn
Loud echoing, add your speed to the pursuit;
So, wearied to your hut shall you return,
And sink at evening into sound repose."

The Solitary lifted toward [2] the hills
A kindling eye:—accordant feelings rushed
Into my bosom, whence these words broke forth: [3]
"Oh! what a joy it were, in vigorous health,

---

[1] 1836.
. . these . . . . . . 1814.

[2] 1827.
. . . . . . towards . . 1814.

[3] 1845.
An animated eye; and thoughts were mine
Which this ejaculation clothed in words— 1814.

A kindling eye;—poetic feelings rushed
Into my bosom, whence these words broke forth: 1827.

---

* Compare "Rules and Lessons" in Henry Vaughan's *Silex Scintillans.* —Ed.

† The heights of Blake Rigg and Lingmoor.—Ed.

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To have a body (this our vital frame
With shrinking sensibility endued,
And all the nice regards of flesh and blood)
And to the elements surrender it
As if it were a spirit!—How divine,
The liberty, for frail, for mortal, man
To roam at large among unpeopled glens
And mountainous retirements, only trod
By devious footsteps; regions consecrate
To oldest time! and, reckless of the storm
That keeps the raven quiet in her nest,
Be as a presence or a motion—one
Among the many there; and while the mists
Flying, and rainy vapours, call out shapes
And phantoms from the crags and solid earth
As fast as a musician scatters sounds
Out of an instrument; and while the streams
(As at a first creation and in haste
To exercise their untried faculties)
Descending from the region of the clouds,
And starting from the hollows of the earth
More multitudinous every moment, rend
Their way before them—what a joy to roam
An equal among mightiest energies;
And haply sometimes with articulate voice,
Amid the deafening tumult, scarcely heard
By him that utters it, exclaim aloud,
'Rage on ye elements! let moon and stars
Their aspects lend, and mingle in their turn
With this commotion (ruinous though it be)
From day to night, from night to day, prolonged!'"[1]

---

[1] 1845.

. . . . . . exclaim aloud
Be this continued so from day to day,
Nor let it have an end from month to month!" 1814.

'Be this continued so from day to day,
Nor let the fierce commotion have an end,
Ruinous though it be, from month to month!'" 1827.

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"Yes," said the Wanderer, taking from my lips
The strain of transport, "whosoe'er in youth
Has, through ambition of his soul, given way
To such desires, and grasped at such delight,
Shall feel congenial stirrings late and long,[1]
In spite of all the weakness that life brings,
Its cares and sorrows; he, though taught to own
The tranquillizing power of time, shall wake,
Wake sometimes to a noble restlessness—
Loving the sports[2] which once he gloried in.

"Compatriot, Friend, remote are Garry's hills,
The streams far distant of your native glen;
Yet is their form and image here expressed
With brotherly resemblance.[3] Turn your steps
Wherever fancy leads; by day, by night,
Are various engines working, not the same
As those with[4] which your soul in youth was moved,
But by the great Artificer endowed[5]
With no inferior power. You dwell alone;
You walk, you live, you speculate alone;

May this wild uproar last from day to day
Nor let from month to month the fierce commotion,
Ruinous though it be, abate its rage. C.

[1] 1827.
Shall feel the stirrings of them late and long; 1814.

[2] 1827.
. . . spots* . . . . . 1814.

[3] 1827.
. . . . expressed
As by a duplicate, at least set forth
With brotherly resemblance. . . . . 1814.

[4] 1836.
. . by . . . . 1814.

[5] 1836.
. . . . endued 1814.

---

* Possibly a misprint in the editions of 1814 and 1820.—Ed.

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Yet doth remembrance, like a sovereign prince,
For you a stately gallery maintain
Of gay or tragic pictures. You have seen,
Have acted, suffered, travelled far, observed
With no incurious eye; and books are yours,
Within whose silent chambers treasure lies
Preserved from age to age; more precious far
Than that accumulated store of gold
And orient gems, which, for a day of need,
The Sultan hides deep in[1] ancestral tombs.
These hoards of truth you can unlock at will:
And music waits upon your skilful touch,
Sounds which the wandering shepherd from these heights
Hears, and forgets his purpose;—furnished thus,
How can you droop, if willing to be upraised?[2]

"A piteous lot it were to flee from Man—
Yet not rejoice in Nature. He, whose hours
Are by domestic pleasures uncaressed
And unenlivened; who exists whole years
Apart from benefits received or done
'Mid the transactions of the bustling crowd;
Who neither hears, nor feels a wish to hear,
Of the world's interests—such a one hath need
Of a quick fancy and an active heart,
That, for the day's consumption, books may yield
Food not unwholesome; earth and air correct
His morbid humour, with delight supplied
Or solace, varying as the seasons change.[3]

---

[1] 1836.
The Sultan hides within . . . 1814.

[2] 1836.
. . . . raised? 1814.

[3] 1845.
A not unwholesome food, and earth and air
Supply his morbid humour with delight. 1814.

Food not unwholesome; earth and air correct
His morbid humour, with delight supplied. 1836.

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—Truth has her pleasure-grounds, her haunts of ease
And easy contemplation; gay parterres,
And labyrinthine walks, her sunny glades
And shady groves in studied contrast—each,
For recreation, leading into each:[1]
These may he range, if willing to partake
Their soft indulgences, and in due time
May issue thence, recruited for the tasks
And course of service Truth requires from those
Who tend her altars, wait upon her throne,
And guard her fortresses. Who thinks, and feels,
And recognises ever and anon
The breeze of nature stirring in his soul,
Why need such man go desperately astray,
And nurse 'the dreadful appetite of death?'
If tired with systems, each in its degree
Substantial, and all crumbling in their turn,
Let him build systems of his own, and smile
At the fond work, demolished with a touch;
If unreligious, let him be at once,
Among ten thousand innocents, enrolled
A pupil in the many-chambered school,
Where superstition weaves her airy dreams.

"Life's autumn past, I stand on winter's verge;
And daily lose what I desire to keep:
Yet rather would I instantly decline
To the traditionary sympathies
Of a most rustic ignorance, and take
A fearful apprehension from the owl
Or death-watch: and as readily rejoice,
If two auspicious magpies crossed my way;—
To this would rather bend[2] than see and hear

[1] 1836.
And shady groves, for recreation framed: 1814.

[2] 1827.
This rather would I do . . . . . 1814.

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The repetitions wearisome of sense,
Where soul is dead, and feeling hath no place;
Where knowledge, ill begun in cold remark
On outward things, with formal inference ends;
Or, if the mind turn inward, she recoils
At once—or, not recoiling, is perplexed—
Lost in a gloom of uninspired research;[1]
Meanwhile, the heart within the heart, the seat
Where peace and happy consciousness should dwell,
On its own axis restlessly revolving,
Seeks, yet can nowhere find, the light of truth.[2] *

"Upon the breast of new-created earth
Man walked; and when and wheresoe'er he moved,
Alone or mated, solitude was not.
He heard, borne on the wind,[3] the articulate voice
Of God; † and Angels to his sight appeared
Crowning the glorious hills of paradise;
Or through the groves gliding like morning mist
Enkindled by the sun. He sate—and talked
With winged Messengers; ‡ who daily brought
To his small island in the ethereal deep

---

[1] 1836.

Or if the Mind turn inward 'tis perplexed,
Lost in a gloom of uninspired research; 1814.

[2] 1845.

. . . . . . restlessly revolves,
Yet nowhere finds the cheering light of truth. 1814.

Rests not but on its axis, evermore
Revolving, nowhere finds the light of truth. C.

Seeks, yet can nowhere find the light of truth. C.

[3] 1836.

He heard, upon the wind, . . . 1814.

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* Compare the *Poet's Epitaph* (vol. ii. p. 75).—ED.
† Compare Genesis iii. 8.—ED.
‡ Genesis xviii. 1, 2.—ED.

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Tidings of joy and love.—From those pure heights [1]
(Whether of actual vision, sensible
To sight and feeling, or that in this sort
Have condescendingly been shadowed forth
Communications spiritually maintained,
And intuitions moral and divine)
Fell Human-kind—to banishment condemned *
That flowing years repealed not: and distress
And grief spread wide; † but Man escaped the doom
Of destitution;—solitude was not.
—Jehovah ‡—shapeless Power above all Powers,
Single and one, the omnipresent God,
By vocal utterance, or blaze of light,
Or cloud of darkness, localised in heaven; §
On earth, enshrined within the wandering ark; ‖
Or, out of Sion, thundering from his throne
Between the Cherubim ¶—on the chosen Race
Showered miracles,** and ceased not to dispense
Judgments, that filled the land from age to age
With hope, and love, and gratitude, and fear; ††
And with amazement smote;—thereby to assert
His scorned, or unacknowledged, sovereignty.
And when the One, ineffable of name,
Of [2] nature indivisible, withdrew
From mortal adoration or regard,
Not then was Deity engulfed; nor Man,
The rational creature, left, to feel the weight

---

[1] 1836.
. . . . . . these pure Heights 1814.

[2] 1827.
In . . . . 1814.

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* Genesis iii. 24.—Ed.
† Genesis iii. 16, 17.—Ed.
‡ Exodus vi. 3.—Ed.
§ Exodus xxxiii. 9; xxxiv. 5.—Ed.
‖ Exodus xxxvii. 1; Hebrews ix. 4.—Ed.
¶ Exodus xxv. 22.—Ed.
** Exodus xv. 25; xvi. 4, etc. etc.—Ed.
†† Exodus vii.-xi.—Ed.

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Of his own reason, without sense or thought
Of higher reason and a purer will,
To benefit and bless, through mightier power:—
Whether the Persian—zealous to reject
Altar and image, and the inclusive walls
And roofs of temples built by human hands—*
To[1] loftiest heights ascending, from their tops,
With myrtle-wreathed tiara on his brow,[2]
Presented sacrifice to moon and stars,
And to the winds and mother elements,
And the whole circle of the heavens, for him
A sensitive existence, and a God,†
With lifted hands invoked, and songs of praise:
Or, less reluctantly to bonds of sense
Yielding his soul, the Babylonian framed
For influence undefined a personal shape;
And, from the plain, with toil immense, upreared
Tower eight times planted on the top of tower,
That Belus, nightly to his splendid couch
Descending, there might rest; ‡ upon that height
Pure and serene, diffused—to overlook[3]

---

[1] 1827.
The . . . . 1814.

[2] 1827.
. . . . brows— 1814.

[3] 1827.
. . . . and, from that Height
Pure and serene, the Godhead overlook 1814.

---

* The ancient Persian religion was nature worship.—ED.

† Compare *Lines composed a few miles above Tintern Abbey*, ll. 100-102 (vol. ii. p. 55)—

A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things. ED.

‡ Herodotus thus describes the temple of Belus:—" . . . A square enclosure two furlongs each way, with gates of solid brass; which were also remaining in my time. In the middle of the precinct there was a tower of solid masonry, a furlong in length and breadth, upon which was raised a second tower, and on that a third, and so up to eight. The ascent to the top is on the outside, by a path which winds round all the towers. When one is about half way up, one finds a resting place and seats, where persons are wont to sit some time in their way to the summit. On the topmost tower

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Winding Euphrates, and the city vast
Of his devoted worshippers, far-stretched,
With grove and field and garden interspersed;
Their town, and foodful region for support
Against the pressure of beleaguering war.

"Chaldean Shepherds, ranging trackless fields,
Beneath the concave of unclouded skies
Spread like a sea, in boundless solitude,
Looked on the polar star, as on a guide
And guardian of their course, that never closed
His stedfast eye. The planetary Five *
With a submissive reverence they beheld;
Watched, from the centre of their sleeping flocks,
Those radiant Mercuries,† that seemed to move
Carrying through ether, in perpetual round,
Decrees and resolutions of the Gods;
And, by their aspects, signifying works
Of dim futurity, to Man revealed.
—The imaginative faculty was lord
Of observations natural; and, thus
Led on, those shepherds made report of stars
In set rotation passing to and fro,

there is a spacious Temple, and inside the Temple stands a couch of unusual size, richly adorned, with a golden table by its side. There is no statue of any kind set up in the place. . . . The Chaldeans, the priests of this God, declare—but I, for my part, do not credit it—that the God comes down nightly into this chamber and sleeps upon the couch."—Herodotus, i. 181. See Rawlinson's version, vol. i. pp. 319, 320. Compare also Josephus, *Ant. Jud.* x. 11, and Strabo, 16.—Ed.

* Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Venus, Mercury—the only planets known to the ancients, the Earth not being included.—Ed.

† The reference here is still apparently to the "planetary Five," which are *all* described as "radiant Mercuries" (although one of them was Mercury), because they all—

seemed to move
Carrying through ether, in perpetual round,
Decrees and resolutions of the Gods;
And, by their aspects, signifying works
Of dim futurity.

This astrological allusion makes it clear that the reference is to the supposed "planetary influence," and to the movements of these bodies—controlled by the gods—with which the fate of mortals was believed to be upbound. For an account of the Gods of the Five Planets, see *Chaldean Magic*, by François Lenormant, pp. 26 and 118.—Ed.

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Between the orbs of our apparent sphere
And its invisible counterpart, adorned
With answering constellations, under earth,
Removed from all approach of living sight
But present to the dead; who, so they deemed,
Like those celestial messengers beheld
All accidents, and judges were of all.

"The lively Grecian, in a land of hills,
Rivers and fertile plains, and sounding shores,—*
Under a cope of sky more variable,[1]
Could find commodious place for every God,
Promptly received, as prodigally brought,
From the surrounding countries, at the choice
Of all adventurers. With unrivalled skill,
As nicest observation furnished hints
For studious fancy, his quick hand bestowed[2]
On fluent operations a fixed shape;
Metal or stone, idolatrously served.
And yet—triumphant o'er this pompous show
Of art, this palpable array of sense,
On every side encountered; in despite
Of the gross fictions chanted in the streets
By wandering Rhapsodists; † and in contempt
Of doubt and bold denial[3] hourly urged

---

[1] 1836.
. . . . of variegated sky, 1814.

[2] 1836.
. . . . did his hand bestow 1814.

[3] 1836.
. . . . denials . . 1814.

---

* Compare *Lycidas*, l. 154—

Ay me! whilst thee the shores and sounding seas,

and note that Charles Lamb, who was familiar with *The Excursion*, quotes the above line ("Distant Correspondents") thus—

Aye me! while thee the seas and sounding shores. Ed.

† The strolling Greek minstrels from Homer onwards, predecessors of the Troubadours.—Ed.

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Amid the wrangling schools—a SPIRIT hung,
Beautiful region! o'er thy towns and farms,
Statues and temples, and memorial tombs;
And emanations were perceived; and acts
Of immortality, in Nature's course,
Exemplified by mysteries, that were felt
As bonds, on grave philosopher imposed
And armed warrior; and in every grove
A gay or pensive tenderness prevailed,
When piety more awful had relaxed.
—'Take, running river, take these locks of mine'—
Thus would the Votary say—'this severed hair,
'My vow fulfilling, do I here present,
'Thankful for my beloved child's return.
'Thy banks, Cephisus, he again hath trod,*
'Thy murmurs heard; and drunk the crystal lymph
'With which thou dost refresh the thirsty lip,
'And, all day long, moisten[1] these flowery fields!'
And, doubtless, sometimes, when the hair was shed
Upon the flowing stream, a thought arose
Of Life continuous, Being unimpaired;
That hath been, is, and where it was and is
There shall endure,—existence unexposed[2]
To the blind walk of mortal accident;
From diminution safe and weakening age;
While man grows old, and dwindles, and decays;
And countless generations of mankind
Depart; and leave no vestige where they trod.

---

[1] 1845.
"And moisten all day long . . . . . 1814.

[2] 1827.
There shall be,—seen, and heard, and felt, and known,
And recognized,—existence unexposed 1814.

---

* The reference is doubtless to Pausanias, i. 37, 3. "Before you cross the Cephisus, there is the monument of Theodorus, who excelled all his contemporaries as an actor in tragedy; and near to the river, there are [two] statues, one of Mnesimache, another of her son, in the act of cutting off his hair [over the stream and presenting it] as a votive offering to the Cephisus." See Note D in the Appendix to this volume, p. 396.—ED.

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"We live by Admiration, Hope, and Love;
And, even as these are well and wisely fixed,
In dignity of being we ascend.
But what is error?"—"Answer he who can!"
The Sceptic somewhat haughtily exclaimed:
"Love, Hope, and Admiration—are they not
Mad Fancy's favourite vassals? Does not life
Use them, full oft, as pioneers to ruin,
Guides to destruction? Is it well to trust
Imagination's light when reason's fails,
The unguarded taper where the guarded faints?
—Stoop from those heights, and soberly declare
What error is; and, of our errors, which
Doth most debase the mind; the genuine seats
Of power, where are they? Who shall regulate,
With truth, the scale of intellectual rank?"

"Methinks," persuasively the Sage replied,
"That for this arduous office you possess
Some rare advantages. Your early days
A grateful recollection must supply
Of much exalted good by Heaven vouchsafed
To dignify the humblest state.[1]—Your voice
Hath, in my hearing, often testified
That poor men's children, they, and they alone,
By their condition taught, can understand
The wisdom of the prayer that daily asks
For daily bread. A consciousness is yours
How feelingly religion may be learned
In smoky cabins, from a mother's tongue—
Heard while the dwelling vibrates to the din
Of the contiguous torrent, gathering strength
At every moment—and, with strength, increase
Of fury; or, while snow is at the door,

[1] 1827.
Of much exalted good that may attend
Upon the very humblest state.— . . 1814.

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Assaulting and defending, and the wind,
A sightless labourer, whistles at his work—
Fearful; but resignation tempers fear,
And piety is sweet to infant minds.
—The Shepherd-lad, that[1] in the sunshine carves,
On the green turf, a dial *—to divide
The silent hours; and who to that report
Can portion out his pleasures, and adapt,
Throughout a long and lonely summer's day
His round[2] of pastoral duties, is not left
With less intelligence for *moral* things
Of gravest import. Early he perceives,
Within himself, a measure and a rule,
Which to the sun of truth he can apply,
That shines for him, and shines for all mankind.
Experience daily fixing his regards
On nature's wants, he knows how few they are,
And where they lie, how answered and appeased.
This knowledge ample recompense affords
For manifold privations; he refers
His notions to this standard; on this rock
Rests his desires; and hence, in after life,
Soul-strengthening patience, and sublime content.
Imagination—not permitted here
To waste her powers, as in the worldling's mind,
On fickle pleasures, and superfluous cares,
And trivial ostentation—is left free
And puissant to range the solemn walks
Of time and nature, girded by a zone

---

[1] 1836.
. . . . who . . . . 1814.

[2] 1836.
. . . . . . and adapt
His round . . . . . . 1814.

---

* Compare *King Henry VI.*, Part III. act II. scene v. ll. 23-25—
To sit upon a hill, as I do now,
To carve out dials quaintly, point by point,
Thereby to see the minutes how they run. ED.

That, while it binds, invigorates and supports.
Acknowledge, then, that whether by the side
Of his poor hut, or on the mountain top,
Or in the cultured field, a Man so bred[1]
(Take from him what you will upon the score
Of ignorance or illusion) lives and breathes
For noble purposes of mind: his heart
Beats to the heroic song of ancient days;
His eye distinguishes, his soul creates.
And those illusions, which excite the scorn
Or move the pity of unthinking minds,
Are they not mainly outward ministers
Of inward conscience? with whose service charged
They came and go, appeared and disappear,[2]
Diverting evil purposes, remorse
Awakening, chastening an intemperate grief,
Or pride of heart abating: and, whene'er
For less important ends those phantoms move,
Who would forbid them, if their presence serve,
On thinly-peopled mountains and wild heaths,[3]
Filling a space, else vacant, to exalt
The forms of Nature, and enlarge her powers?

"Once more to distant ages of the world
Let us revert, and place before our thoughts
The face which rural solitude might wear
To the unenlightened swains of pagan Greece.[4]

---

[1] 1827.
. . . . . . a Man like this 1814.

[2] 1827.
They come and go, appear and disappear; 1814.
. . . . . . disappear'd, MS.

[3] 1845.
Among wild mountains and unpeopled heaths, 1814.
Among wild hills, and thinly-peopled shores, C.

[4] 1814.
Once more to distant ages of the world
Let us revert and contemplate the face,

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—In that fair clime, the lonely herdsman, stretched
On the soft grass through half a summer's day,
With music lulled his indolent repose:
And, in some fit of weariness, if he,
When his own breath was silent, chanced to hear
A distant strain, far sweeter than the sounds
Which his poor skill could make, his fancy fetched,
Even from the blazing chariot of the sun,
A beardless Youth, who touched a golden lute,*
And filled the illumined groves with ravishment.
The nightly hunter, lifting a bright eye
Up towards the crescent moon,[1] with grateful heart
Called on the lovely wanderer who bestowed
That timely light, to share his joyous sport:[2]
And hence, a beaming Goddess with her Nymphs,†
Across the lawn and through the darksome grove,
Not unaccompanied with tuneful notes
By echo multiplied from rock or cave,
Swept in the storm of chase; as moon and stars

That face which rural solitude might wear
To the unenlightened sons of pagan Greece. C.

Which Nature in her solitudes might wear. C.

[1] 1836.
. . . . . . lifting up his eyes
Towards the crescent Moon, . . . 1814.

[2] 1814.
Helped by the reflection of her own fair face,
Or rather say the lover at her side,
Looking with earnest eyes into the depth
Of a still lake amid the glimmering growth
Of plants that there were nourished. C.

Helped by reflection of her own fair face,
Or, if not she, the lover at her side,
Some beautiful inhabitant who there
Might dwell in calm security unknown
To mortal credence. Hence the green haired brood. C.

* Apollo.—Ed. † Diana.—Ed.

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Glance rapidly along the clouded heaven,[1]
When winds are blowing strong. The traveller slaked
His thirst from rill or gushing fount, and thanked
The Naiad.* Sunbeams, upon distant hills
Gliding apace, with shadows in their train,
Might, with small help from fancy, be transformed
Into fleet Oreads * sporting visibly.
The Zephyrs * fanning, as they passed, their wings,
Lacked not, for love, fair objects whom they wooed
With gentle whisper. Withered boughs grotesque,
Stripped of their leaves and twigs by hoary age,
From depth of shaggy covert peeping forth
In the low vale, or on steep mountain side;
And, sometimes, intermixed with stirring horns
Of the live deer, or goat's depending beard,—
These were the lurking Satyrs,* a wild brood
Of gamesome Deities; or Pan himself,
The simple shepherd's awe-inspiring God!."

The strain was aptly chosen; and I could mark[2]
Its kindly influence, o'er[3] the yielding brow
Of our Companion, gradually diffused;
While, listening, he had paced the noiseless turf,
Like one whose untired ear a murmuring stream
Detains; but tempted now to interpose,
He with a smile exclaimed:—

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[1] 1827.
. . . . heavens, 1814.

[2] 1845.
No apter Strain could have been chosen: I marked 1814.
As this apt strain proceeded, I could mark 1827.

[3] 1827.
. . . . . on . . . . 1814.

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* The ναϊάδες (water-nymphs) and ὀρειάδες (mountain-nymphs), with others of the meadows woods and dales, sprung from the fertile imagination of the Greeks. Wordsworth's explanation of the origin of these myths from natural causes is not peculiar to him, although his lines are a *locus classicus* on the subject; but his explanation of the "lurking Satyrs," as due to the sight of the horns of the deer, or the goats, in the woods, is probably his own.—ED.

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"'Tis well you speak
At a safe distance from our native land,
And from the mansions where our youth was taught.
The true descendants of those godly men
Who swept from Scotland, in a flame of zeal,
Shrine, altar, image, and the massy piles
That harboured them,—the souls retaining yet
The churlish features of that after-race
Who fled to woods, caverns, and jutting rocks,[1]
In deadly scorn of superstitious rites,
Or what their scruples construed to be such—
How, think you, would they tolerate this scheme
Of fine propensities, that tends, if urged
Far as it might be urged, to sow afresh
The weeds of Romish phantasy, in vain
Uprooted; would re-consecrate our wells
To good Saint Fillan * and to fair Saint Anne;
And from long banishment recal Saint Giles, †
To watch again with tutelary love
O'er stately Edinborough throned on crags?
A blessed restoration, ‡ to behold

[1] 1836.
Who fled to caves, and woods, and naked rocks 1814.

* St. Fillan. There were two Scottish saints of that name. The first, and most famous, the particulars of whose life are recorded in the Breviary of Aberdeen, Felanus, or Fœlanus, Fælan, Fillanus, Filane, or Phillane, the son of Kentigern. In Perthshire, the scene of his labours, a river and a strath are called after him, and a Church dedicated to him. He was associated with the battle of Bannockburn. (See *Kalendars of Scottish Saints*, by A. P. Forbes, Bishop of Brechin.)—Ed.

† For the legendary History of St. Giles see the Breviary of the Roman Church. (It has been translated recently by the Marquis of Bute.) Dr. Cameron Lees, minister of St. Giles' Cathedral Church, Edinburgh, sends me the following notice of the Saint:—"How St. Giles became the patron Saint of Edinburgh is not known. His 'hind' is upon the arms of the city.* An arm bone of St. Giles was one of the chief treasures of the church. It was brought from France by Preston of Gorton, who procured it by the 'assistance of the King of France.' This relic was contained in a richly jewelled shrine, and carried through Edinburgh in procession on the Saint's day, the 1st September. An account of this procession is given by Sir D. Lindsay and by Knox. The only other church in Scotland under the dedication of St. Giles was at Elgin."—Ed.

‡ Now happily accomplished through the labour and the munificence of the late Dr. Chambers.—Ed.

* For reference to the "Hind," see the Breviary.—Ed.

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The patron, on the shoulders of his priests,
Once more parading through her crowded streets
Now simply guarded by the sober powers
Of science, and philosophy, and sense!"

This answer followed.—"You have turned my thoughts
Upon our brave Progenitors, who rose
Against idolatry with warlike mind,
And shrunk from vain observances, to lurk
In woods, and dwell under impending rocks
Ill-sheltered, and oft wanting fire and food;[1]
Why?—for this very reason that they felt,
And did acknowledge, wheresoe'er they moved,
A spiritual presence, oft-times misconceived,
But still a high dependence, a divine
Bounty and government, that filled their hearts
With joy, and gratitude, and fear, and love;
And from their fervent lips drew hymns of praise,
That through the desert rang.[2] Though favoured less,
Far less, than these, yet such, in their degree,
Were those bewildered Pagans of old time.
Beyond their own poor natures and above
They looked; were humbly thankful for the good
Which the warm sun solicited, and earth
Bestowed; were gladsome,—and their moral sense
They fortified with reverence for the Gods;
And they had hopes that overstepped the Grave.

"Now, shall our great Discoverers," he exclaimed,
Raising his voice triumphantly, "obtain
From sense and reason less than these obtained,

[1] 1845.
In caves, and woods, and under dismal rocks,
Deprived of shelter, covering, fire, and food; 1814.
In woods, and dwell beneath impending rocks
Ill-sheltered, and oft wanting fire and food; 1836.

[2] 1827.
With which the desarts rang. . . . . 1814.

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Though far misled? Shall men for whom our age
Unbaffled powers of vision hath prepared,
To explore the world without and world within,
Be joyless as the blind? Ambitious spirits—[1]
Whom earth, at this late season, hath produced
To regulate the moving spheres, and weigh
The planets in the hollow of their hand;
And they who rather dive than soar, whose pains
Have solved the elements, or analysed
The thinking principle—shall they in fact
Prove a degraded Race? and what avails
Renown, if their presumption make them such?
Oh! there is laughter at their work in heaven!
Inquire of ancient Wisdom; go, demand
Of mighty Nature, if 'twas ever meant
That we should pry far off yet be unraised;
That we should pore, and dwindle as we pore,
Viewing all objects unremittingly
In disconnexion dead and spiritless;
And still dividing, and dividing still,
Break down all grandeur, still unsatisfied
With the perverse attempt, while littleness
May yet become more little; waging thus
An impious warfare with the very life
Of our own souls!
"And if indeed there be
An all-pervading Spirit, upon whom
Our dark foundations rest, could he design
That this [2] magnificent effect of power,
The earth we tread, the sky that [3] we behold

[1] 1836.
. . . . Souls— 1814.

[2] 1827.
. . . . . . could He design,
Or will his rites and services permit,
That this . . . . 1814.

[3] 1827.
. . . . . . which . . 1814.

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By day, and all the pomp which night reveals;
That these—and that superior mystery
Our vital frame, so fearfully devised,
And the dread soul within it—should exist
Only to be examined, pondered, searched,
Probed, vexed, and criticised? *—Accuse me not
Of arrogance, unknown Wanderer as I am,
If, having walked with Nature threescore years,
And offered, far as frailty would allow,
My heart a daily sacrifice to Truth,
I now affirm of Nature and of Truth,
Whom I have served, that their DIVINITY
Revolts, offended at the ways of men
Swayed by such motives, to such ends[1] employed;
Philosophers, who, though the human soul
Be[2] of a thousand faculties composed,
And twice ten thousand interests, do yet prize
This soul, and the transcendent universe,
No more than as a mirror that reflects
To proud Self-love her own intelligence;
That one, poor, finite object, in the abyss
Of infinite Being, twinkling restlessly!

"Nor higher place can be assigned to him
And his compeers—the laughing Sage of France.—†
Crowned was he, if my memory do[3] not err,
With laurel planted upon hoary hairs,
In sign of conquest by his wit achieved
And benefits his wisdom had conferred;

[1] 1836.
. . . . . . end . . 1814.

[2] 1827.
. . . . . when the human soul
Is . . . . 1814.

[3] 1827.
. . . . . . doth . . 1814.

* Compare the *Poet's Epitaph* (vol. ii. p. 75).—ED.
† Voltaire.—ED.

His stooping body tottered with wreaths of flowers *
Opprest, far less becoming ornaments
Than Spring oft twines about a mouldering tree ;[1]
Yet so it pleased a fond, a vain, old Man,
And a most frivolous people. Him I mean
Who penned,[2] to ridicule confiding faith,
This sorry Legend ; which by chance we found
Piled in a nook, through malice, as might seem,
Among more innocent rubbish."—Speaking thus,
With a brief notice when, and how, and where,
We had espied the book, he drew it forth ;
And courteously, as if the act removed,
At once, all traces from the good Man's heart
Of unbenign aversion or contempt,
Restored it to its owner. "Gentle Friend,"
Herewith he grasped the Solitary's hand,
"You have known lights and guides better than these.[3]

---

[1] 1840.

His tottering Body was oppressed with flowers ;
Far less becoming ornaments than those
With which Spring often decks a mouldering Tree ! 1814.

His tottering Body was with wreaths of flowers
Opprest, far less becoming ornaments
Than Spring oft twines about a mouldering Tree ; 1827.

[2] 1827.

. framed, ... 1814.

[3] 1845.

. . . better Lights and Guides than
these— 1814.

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* In his eighty-fourth year, Voltaire went up to Paris from Ferney in Switzerland (where he had lived for twenty years), and amid the tumultuous enthusiasm of the Parisians, he was crowned at the Comédie Française, as the Athenian poets used to be. "The Court of the Louvre, vast as it is, was full of people waiting for him. As soon as his notable vehicle came in sight, the cry arose, *Le voilà!* The Savoyards, the apple-women, all the rabble of the quarter had assembled there, and the acclamations *Vive Voltaire!* resounded as if they would never end. . . . There was no end till he placed himself on the front seat, beside the ladies. Then rose a cry *La Couronne!* and Brizard, the actor, came and put the garland on his head. *Ah Dieu! vous voulez donc me faire mourir?* cried M. de Voltaire, weeping with joy, and resisting the honour. . . . The Prince de Beauvan, seizing the laurel, replaced it on the head of our Sophocles, who could refuse no longer." (*Memoires sur Voltaire*, par Longchamp et Wagnière.)—Ed.

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Ah! let not aught amiss within dispose
A noble mind to practise on herself,
And tempt opinion to support the wrongs
Of passion: whatsoe'er be[1] felt or feared,
From higher judgment-seats make no appeal
To lower: can you question that the soul
Inherits an allegiance, not by choice
To be cast off, upon an oath proposed
By each new upstart notion? In the ports
Of levity no refuge can be found,
No shelter, for a spirit in distress.
He, who by wilful disesteem of life
And proud insensibility to hope,
Affronts the eye of Solitude, shall learn
That her mild nature can be terrible;
That neither she nor Silence lack the power
To avenge their own insulted majesty.

"O blest seclusion! when the mind admits
The law of duty; and can therefore move[2]
Through each vicissitude of loss and gain,
Linked in entire complacence with her choice;
When youth's presumptuousness is mellowed down,
And manhood's vain anxiety dismissed;
When wisdom shows her seasonable fruit,
Upon the boughs of sheltering leisure hung
In sober plenty; when the spirit stoops
To drink with gratitude the crystal stream
Of unreproved enjoyment; and is pleased
To muse, and be saluted by the air
Of meek repentance, wafting wall-flower scents
From out the crumbling ruins of fallen pride
And chambers of transgression, now forlorn.
O, calm contented days, and peaceful nights!

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[1] 1827.
. . . . is . . . 1814.

[2] 1827.
. . . . and thereby can live, 1814.

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Who, when such good can be obtained, would strive
To reconcile his manhood to a couch
Soft, as may seem, but, under that disguise,
Stuffed with the thorny substance of the past
For fixed annoyance; and full oft beset
With floating dreams, black and disconsolate,[1]
The vapoury phantoms of futurity?

"Within the soul a faculty abides,
That with interpositions, which would hide
And darken, so can deal that they become
Contingencies of pomp; and serve to exalt
Her native brightness. As the ample moon,
In the deep stillness of a summer even
Rising behind a thick and lofty grove,
Burns, like an unconsuming fire of light,
In the green trees; and, kindling on all sides
Their leafy umbrage, turns the dusky veil
Into a substance glorious as her own,
Yea, with her own incorporated, by power
Capacious and serene. Like power abides
In man's celestial spirit; virtue thus
Sets forth and magnifies herself; thus feeds
A calm, a beautiful, and silent fire,
From the encumbrances of mortal life,
From error, disappointment—nay, from guilt;
And sometimes, so relenting justice wills,
From palpable oppressions of despair."

The Solitary by these words was touched
With manifest emotion, and exclaimed;
"But how begin? and whence?—'The Mind is free—
Resolve,' the haughty Moralist would say,
'This single act is all that we demand.'
Alas! such wisdom bids a creature fly

[1] 1836.
. . . . disconsolate and black, 1814.

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Whose very sorrow is, that time hath shorn
His natural wings!—To friendship let him turn
For succour; but perhaps he sits alone
On stormy waters, tossed in a little boat [1]
That holds but him, and can contain no more!
Religion tells of amity sublime
Which no condition can preclude; of One
Who sees all suffering, comprehends all wants,
All weakness fathoms, can supply all needs:
But is that bounty absolute?—His gifts,
Are they not, still, in some degree, rewards
For acts of service? Can his love extend
To hearts that own not him? Will showers of grace,
When in the sky no promise may be seen,
Fall to refresh a parched and withered land?
Or shall the groaning Spirit cast her load
At the Redeemer's feet?"
                                        In rueful tone,
With some impatience in his mien, he spake:
Back to my mind rushed all that had been urged
To calm the Sufferer when his story closed;
I looked for counsel as unbending now;
But a discriminating sympathy
Stooped to this apt reply:—[2]
                                        "As men from men
Do, in the constitution of their souls,
Differ, by mystery not to be explained;
And as we fall by various ways, and sink
One deeper than another, self-condemned,
Through manifold degrees of guilt and shame;
So manifold and various are the ways
Of restoration, fashioned to the steps

[1] 1836.
On stormy waters, in a little Boat 1814.

[2] 1827.
                                        In rueful tone,
With some impatience in his mien he spake;
And this reply was given.— 1814.

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Of all infirmity, and tending all
To the same point, attainable by all—
Peace in ourselves, and union with our God.
For you, assuredly, a hopeful road [1]
Lies open: we have heard from you a voice
At every moment softened in its course
By tenderness of heart; have seen your eye,
Even like an altar lit by fire from heaven,
Kindle before us.—Your discourse this day,
That, like the fabled Lethe, wished to flow
In creeping sadness, through oblivious shades
Of death and night, has caught at every turn
The colours of the sun. Access for you
Is yet preserved to principles of truth,
Which the imaginative Will upholds
In seats of wisdom, not to be approached
By the inferior Faculty that moulds,
With her minute and speculative pains,
Opinion, ever changing!
"I have seen
A curious child, who dwelt upon a tract
Of inland ground, applying to his ear
The convolutions of a smooth-lipped shell;
To which, in silence hushed,[2] his very soul
Listened intensely; and his countenance soon
Brightened with joy; for from within were heard
Murmurings, whereby the monitor expressed [3]
Mysterious union with its native sea.

---

[1] 1827.
—For Him, to whom I speak, an easy road 1814.
Then do not droop, a hopeful road for you. MS.

[2] 1814.
And while in silence hushed . . . C.

[3] 1845.
Brightened with joy; for murmurings from within
Were heard,—sonorous cadences! whereby,
To his belief, the Monitor expressed 1814.

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Even such a shell * the universe itself
Is to the ear of Faith; and there are times,
I doubt not, when to you it doth impart
Authentic tidings of invisible things;
Of ebb and flow, and ever-during power;
And central peace, subsisting at the heart
Of endless agitation. Here you stand,
Adore, and worship, when you know it not;
Pious beyond the intention of your thought;
Devout above the meaning of your will.
—Yes, you have felt, and may not cease to feel.
The estate of man would be indeed forlorn
If false conclusions of the reasoning power
Made the eye blind, and closed the passages
Through which the ear converses with the heart.
Has not the soul, the being of your life,
Received a shock of awful consciousness,
In some calm season, when these lofty rocks
At night's approach bring down the unclouded sky,
To rest upon their circumambient walls;
A temple framing of dimensions vast,
And yet not too enormous for the sound
Of human anthems,—choral song, or burst
Sublime of instrumental harmony,
To glorify the Eternal! What if these
Did never break the stillness that prevails
Here,—if the solemn nightingale † be mute,

* Compare Walter Savage Landor, *Gebir*, book i. l. 159—

But I have sinuous shells of pearly hue
Within, and they that lustre have imbibed
In the Sun's palace-porch, where when unyoked
His chariot-wheel stands midway in the wave:
Shake one and it awakens, then apply
Its polish'd lips to your attentive ear,
And it remembers its august abodes,
And murmurs as the ocean murmurs there.

Compare also the Fenwick note to the *Evening Voluntary*, beginning—

What mischief cleaves — Ed.

† The nightingale is not heard farther north than the Trent valley, and there are no woodlarks in the Lake country, as hawks are numerous. —Ed.

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And the soft woodlark here did never chant
Her vespers,*—Nature fails not to provide
Impulse and utterance. The whispering air
Sends inspiration from the shadowy heights,
And blind recesses of the caverned rocks;
The little rills, and waters numberless,
Inaudible by daylight, blend their notes
With the loud streams: and often, at the hour
When issue forth the first pale stars, is heard,
Within the circuit of this fabric huge,
One voice—the solitary raven, flying
Athwart the concave of the dark blue dome,
Unseen, perchance above all [1] power of sight—
An iron knell! with echoes from afar
Faint—and still fainter—as the cry, with which
The wanderer accompanies her flight
Through the calm region, fades upon the ear,
Diminishing by distance till it seemed
To expire; yet from the abyss is caught again,
And yet again recovered! †
"But descending
From these imaginative heights, that yield
Far-stretching views into eternity,

---

[1] 1827.
. . . . . the . . . . 1814.

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* See note † on previous page.

† The following occurs in Dorothy Wordsworth's Grasmere Journal, July 27, 1800:—"After tea we rowed down to Loughrigg Fell, visited the white foxglove, gathered wild strawberries, and walked up to view Rydale. We lay a long time looking at the lake; the shores all dim with the scorching sun. The ferns were turning yellow, that is, here and there one was quite turned. We walked round by Benson's wood home. The lake was now most still, and reflected the beautiful yellow and blue and purple and grey colours of the sky. We heard a strange sound in the Bainriggs wood, as we were floating on the water: it *seemed* in the wood, but it must have been above it, for presently we saw a raven very high above us. It called out, and the dome of the sky seemed to echo the sound. It called again and again as it flew onwards, and the mountains gave back the sound, seeming as if from their centre; a musical bell-like answering to the bird's hoarse voice. We heard both the call of the bird, and the echo, after we could see him no longer."

Compare the Fenwick note to the *Evening Voluntary* (1834), beginning—

The leaves that rustled on this oak-crowned hill. ED.

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Acknowledge that to Nature's humbler power
Your cherished sullenness is forced to bend
Even here, where her amenities are sown
With sparing hand. Then trust yourself abroad
To range her blooming bowers, and spacious fields,
Where on the labours of the happy throng
She smiles, including in her wide embrace
City, and town, and tower,—and sea with ships
Sprinkled;—be our Companion while we track
Her rivers populous with gliding life;
While, free as air, o'er printless sands we march,
Or[1] pierce the gloom of her majestic woods;
Roaming, or resting under grateful shade
In peace and meditative cheerfulness;
Where living things, and things inanimate,
Do speak, at Heaven's command, to eye and ear,
And speak to social reason's inner sense,
With inarticulate language.

"For, the Man—
Who, in this spirit, communes with the Forms
Of nature, who with understanding heart
Both knows and loves[2] such objects as excite
No morbid passions, no disquietude,
No vengeance, and no hatred—needs must feel
The joy of that pure principle of love
So deeply, that, unsatisfied with aught
Less pure and exquisite, he cannot choose
But seek for objects of a kindred love
In fellow-natures and a kindred joy.
Accordingly he by degrees perceives
His feelings of aversion softened down;
A holy tenderness pervade his frame.
His sanity of reason not impaired,

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[1] 1827.
And . . . . 1814.

[2] 1836.
Doth know and love . . . . . 1814.

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Say rather, all his thoughts now flowing clear,
From a clear fountain flowing, he looks round
And seeks for good ; and finds the good he seeks :
Until abhorrence and contempt are things
He only knows by name ; and, if he hear,
From other mouths, the language which they speak,
He is compassionate ; and has no thought,
No feeling, which can overcome his love.

"And further ; by contemplating these Forms
In the relations which they bear to man,
He shall discern, how, through the various means
Which silently they yield, are multiplied
The spiritual presences of absent things.
Trust me,[1] that for the instructed, time will come
When they shall meet no object but may teach
Some acceptable lesson to their minds
Of human suffering, or of human joy.
So shall they learn, while all things speak of man,
Their duties from all forms ;[2] and general laws,
And local accidents, shall tend alike
To rouse, to urge ; and, with the will, confer
The ability to spread the blessings wide
Of true philanthropy. The light of love
Not failing, perseverance from their steps
Departing not, for them shall be confirmed[3]
The glorious habit by which sense is made

---

[1] 1827.
. . . . . of absent Things,
Convoked by knowledge ; and for his delight
Still ready to obey the gentle call.
Trust me, ... 1814.

[2] 1827.
For them shall all things speak of Man, they read
Their duties in all forms ; . . . . . 1814.

[3] 1827.
Departing not, they shall at length obtain 1814.

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Subservient still to moral purposes,
Auxiliar to divine. That change shall clothe
The naked spirit, ceasing to deplore
The burthen of existence. Science then
Shall be a precious visitant; and then,
And only then, be worthy of her name:
For then her heart shall kindle; her dull eye,
Dull and inanimate, no more shall hang
Chained to its object in brute slavery;
But taught with patient interest to watch
The processes of things, and serve the cause
Of order and distinctness, not for this
Shall it forget that its most noble use,
Its most illustrious province, must be found
In furnishing clear guidance, a support
Not treacherous, to the mind's *excursive* power.
—So build we up the Being that we are;
Thus deeply drinking-in the soul of things,
We shall be wise perforce; and, while inspired
By choice, and conscious that the Will is free,
Shall move unswerving, even as if impelled [1]
By strict necessity, along the path
Of order and of good. Whate'er we see,
Or feel, shall tend to quicken and refine;
Shall fix, in calmer seats of moral strength,
Earthly desires; and raise, to loftier heights
Of divine love, our intellectual soul." [2]

---

[1] 1836.
Unswerving shall we move, as if impelled 1814.

[2] 1845.
. . . . . . Whate'er we see,
Whate'er we feel, by agency direct
Or indirect shall tend to feed and nurse
Our faculties, shall fix in calmer seats
Of moral strength, and raise to loftier heights
Of love divine, our intellectual Soul." 1814.

Whate'er we feel, shall tend to feed and nurse,
By agency direct or indirect,

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Here closed the Sage that eloquent harangue,
Poured forth with fervour in continuous stream,
Such as, remote, 'mid savage wilderness,
An Indian Chief discharges from his breast
Into the hearing of assembled tribes,[1]
In open circle seated round, and hushed
As the unbreathing air, when not a leaf
Stirs in the mighty woods.—So did he speak:
The words he uttered shall not pass away
Dispersed, like music that the wind takes up
By snatches, and lets fall, to be forgotten;
No—they sank into me,[2] the bounteous gift
Of one whom time and nature had made wise,
Gracing his doctrine [3] with authority
Which hostile spirits silently allow;
Of one accustomed to desires that feed
On fruitage gathered from the tree of life;
To hopes on knowledge and experience built;
Of one in whom persuasion and belief
Had ripened into faith, and faith become
A passionate intuition; whence the Soul,

Our faculties, shall fix in calmer seats
Of moral strength, and raise to loftier heights
Of divine love, ... 1836.

. . . . . Whate'er we see
Or feel shall tend to quicken and refine
The humbler functions of corporeal sense. C.

. . . . or refine
The humblest . . . . MS.

[1] 1827.
. . . . of the assembled Tribes, 1814.

[2] 1836.
. . . . . shall not pass away;
For they sank into me— . . . . . 1814.

[3] 1836.
. . . language . . . . . 1814.

Though bound to earth by ties of pity and love,
From all injurious servitude was free.

The Sun, before his place of rest were reached,
Had yet to travel far, but unto us,
To us who stood low in that hollow dell,
He had become invisible,—a pomp
Leaving behind of yellow radiance spread
Over[1] the mountain sides, in contrast bold
With ample shadows, seemingly, no less
Than those resplendent lights, his rich bequest;
A dispensation of his evening power.
—Adown the path that[2] from the glen had led
The funeral train, the Shepherd and his Mate
Were seen descending:—forth to greet them ran[3]
Our little Page: the rustic pair approach;
And in the Matron's countenance may be read
Plain indication[4] that the words, which told
How that neglected Pensioner was sent
Before his time into a quiet grave,
Had done to her humanity no wrong:
But we are kindly welcomed—promptly served
With ostentatious zeal.—Along the floor
Of the small Cottage in the lonely Dell
A grateful couch was spread for our repose;
Where, in the guise of mountaineers, we lay,[5]
Stretched upon fragrant heath, and lulled by sound

---

[1] 1836.
Upon . . . . 1814.

[2] 1827.
. . . which . . . . 1814.

[3] 1827.
. . . . forth in transport ran 1814.

[4] 1845.
. . . . aspect may be read
A plain assurance . . . . . . 1814.

[5] 1845.
. . . . slept, 1814.

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Of far-off torrents charming the still night,
And, to tired limbs and over-busy thoughts,
Inviting sleep and soft forgetfulness.[1]

Book Fifth

THE PASTOR

ARGUMENT

Farewell to the Valley—Reflections—A large and populous Vale described[2]—The Pastor's Dwelling, and some account of him[3]—Church and Monuments—The Solitary musing, and where—Roused—In the Churchyard the Solitary communicates the thoughts which had recently passed through his mind—Lofty tone of the Wanderer's discourse of yesterday adverted to—Rite of Baptism, and the professions accompanying it, contrasted with the real state of human life—Apology for the Rite[4]—Inconsistency of the best men—Acknowledgment that practice falls far below the injunctions of duty as existing in the mind—General complaint of a falling off in the value of life after the time of youth—Outward appearances of content and happiness in degree illusive—Pastor approaches—Appeal made to him—His answer—Wanderer in sympathy with him—Suggestion that the least ambitious enquirers may be most free from error—The Pastor

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[1] Added in c.
Till every thought as gently as a flower,
That shuts its eyes at close of every day
Had folded up itself in dreamless sleep.*

[2] 1836.
Sight of a large and populous Vale—Solitary consents to go forward—Vale described— 1814.

[3] 1836.
The Church-yard— 1814.

[4] *Apology for the Rite—*
First inserted in the edition of 1836.

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* With this compare *The Prelude*, book i. line 463 (vol. iii. p. 146)—
Till all was tranquil as a dreamless sleep.

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is desired to give some portraits of the living or dead from his own observation of life among these Mountains—and for what purpose—Pastor consents—Mountain cottage—Excellent qualities of its Inhabitants—Solitary expresses his pleasure; but denies the praise of virtue to worth of this kind—Feelings of the Priest before he enters upon his account of persons interred in the Churchyard—Graves of unbaptised Infants[1]*—Funeral and sepulchral observances, whence—Ecclesiastical Establishments, whence derived—Profession of belief in the doctrine of Immortality*

"FAREWELL, deep Valley, with thy one rude House,
And its small lot of life-supporting fields,
And guardian rocks!—Farewell, attractive seat![2]
To the still influx of the morning light
Open, and[3] day's pure cheerfulness, but veiled
From human observation,* as if yet
Primeval forests wrapped thee round with dark
Impenetrable shade; once more farewell,
Majestic circuit, beautiful abyss,
By Nature destined from the birth of things
For quietness profound!"
Upon the side
Of that brown ridge, sole outlet of the vale †
Which foot of boldest stranger would attempt,
Lingering[4] behind my comrades, thus I breathed

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[1] 1836.
What sensations they excite— 1814.

[2] 1827.
And guardian rocks!—With unreverted eyes
I cannot pass thy bounds, attractive Seat! 1814.

[3] Open, to . . . . MS.

[4] 1836.
Upon the side
Of that green Slope, the outlet of the Vale,
Lingering . . . . 1814.
Of that brown Slope, ... 1827.

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* The "semicirque of turf-clad ground," where the conversations recorded in books iii. and iv. had been carried on.—ED.
† Towards Little Langdale.—ED.

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A parting tribute to a spot that seemed
Like the fixed centre of a troubled world.
Again I halted with reverted eyes;
The chain that would not slacken, was at length
Snapt,—and, pursuing leisurely my way,
How vain, thought I, is it by change of place[1]
To seek that comfort which the mind denies;
Yet trial and temptation oft are shunned
Wisely; and by such tenure[2] do we hold
Frail life's possessions, that even they whose fate
Yields no peculiar reason of complaint
Might, by the promise that is here, be won
To steal from active duties, and embrace
Obscurity, and undisturbed repose.[3]
—Knowledge, methinks, in these disordered times,
Should be allowed a privilege to have
Her anchorites, like piety of old; *
Men, who, from faction sacred, and unstained
By war, might, if so minded, turn aside
Uncensured, and subsist, a scattered few
Living to God and nature, and content
With that communion. Consecrated be
The spots where such abide! But happier still
The Man, whom, furthermore, a hope attends
That meditation and research may guide
His privacy to principles and powers
Discovered or invented; or set forth,
Through his acquaintance with the ways of truth,

[1] 1836.
. . . . . of a troubled World.
And now, pursuing leisurely my way,
How vain, thought I, it is by change of place 1814.

[2] 1827.
. . . . . tenor . . . . 1814.

[3] 1845.
Obscurity, and calm forgetfulness. 1814.

* See Matthew Arnold's address as President of the Wordsworth Society, in its *Transactions* for the year 1883.—ED.

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In lucid order; so that, when his course
Is run, some faithful eulogist may say,
He sought not praise, and praise did overlook
His unobtrusive merit; but his life,
Sweet to himself, was exercised in good
That shall survive his name and memory.

Acknowledgments of gratitude sincere
Accompanied these musings; fervent thanks
For my own peaceful lot and happy choice;
A choice that from the passions of the world
Withdrew, and fixed me in a still retreat;
Sheltered, but not to social duties lost,
Secluded, but not buried; and with song
Cheering my days, and with industrious thought;
With the ever-welcome[1] company of books;
With[2] virtuous friendship's soul-sustaining aid,
And with the blessings of domestic love.

Thus occupied in mind I paced along,
Following the rugged road, by sledge or wheel
Worn in the moorland,* till I overtook
My two Associates, in the morning sunshine
Halting together on a rocky knoll,
Whence the bare road[3] descended rapidly
To the green meadows of another vale.†

[1] 1814.
With ever-welcome . . . . . . 1827.
The text of 1836 returns to that of 1814.

[2] 1836.
By . . . . 1814.

[3] 1845.
From which the road . . . . . 1814.

* The sledge used for bringing down peats or bracken from the uplands. The "sledge" has not yet entirely given way to the "wheel," many of the Westmoreland peasants still using it, when bringing down their winter stores of fuel and bedding, as they do in Norway.—Ed.

† The vale of Little Langdale.—Ed.

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Here did our pensive Host put forth his hand
In sign of farewell. "Nay," the old Man said,
"The fragrant air its coolness still retains;
The herds and flocks are yet abroad to crop
The dewy grass; you cannot leave us now,
We must not part at this inviting hour."
He yielded,[1] though reluctant; for his mind
Instinctively disposed him to retire
To his own covert; as a billow, heaved
Upon the beach, rolls back into the sea.
—So we descend: and winding round a rock
Attain a point that showed the valley—stretched
In length before us;* and, not distant far,
Upon a rising ground a grey church-tower,*
Whose battlements were screened by tufted trees.
And towards a crystal Mere, that lay beyond
Among steep hills and woods embosomed, flowed
A copious stream with boldly-winding course;
Here traceable, there hidden—there again
To sight restored, and glittering in the sun.
On the stream's bank, and every where, appeared
Fair dwellings, single, or in social knots;
Some scattered o'er the level, others perched
On the hill sides, a cheerful quiet scene,
Now in its morning purity arrayed.

---

[1] 1827.
To that injunction, earnestly expressed,
He yielded, ... 1814.

---

* "After we quit his cottage, passing over a low ridge, we descend into another vale, that of Little Langdale, towards the head of which stands embowered, or partly shaded by yews and other trees, something between a cottage and a mansion, or gentleman's house, such as they once were in this country. This I convert into the parsonage, and at the same time, and as by the waving of a magic wand, I turn the comparatively confined vale of Langdale, its tarn, and the rude chapel which once adorned the valley, into the stately and comparatively spacious vale of Grasmere and its ancient parish church."—I. F.

The Fenwick note is not quite clear as to the relation of Hackett to Blea Tarn Cottage. Dr. Cradock thinks that "Wordsworth meant that his description of the cottage was borrowed from Hackett (which he frequently visited), so far at least as the solitary clock, and the cottage stairs, and the dark and low apartments were concerned."—Ed.

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"As 'mid some happy valley of the Alps,"
Said I, "once happy, ere tyrannic power,
Wantonly breaking in upon the Swiss,
Destroyed their unoffending commonwealth,
A popular equality reigns here,
Save for yon stately House * beneath whose roof
A rural lord might dwell."—"No feudal pomp,
Or power," replied the Wanderer, "to that House
Belongs, but there in his allotted Home
Abides, from year to year, a genuine Priest,[1]
The shepherd of his flock; or, as a king
Is styled, when most affectionately praised,
The father of his people. Such is he;
And rich and poor, and young and old, rejoice
Under his spiritual sway. He hath vouchsafed [2]
To me some portion of a [3] kind regard;
And something also of his inner mind
Hath he imparted—but I speak of him
As he is known to all.
The calm delights
Of unambitious piety he chose,

[1] 1845.
A popular equality doth seem
Here to prevail; and yet a House of State
Stands yonder, one beneath whose roof, methinks,
A rural Lord might dwell." "No feudal pomp,"
Replied our Friend, a Chronicler who stood
Where'er he moved upon familiar ground,
"Nor feudal power is there; but there abides,
In his allotted Home a genuine Priest, 1814.

A popular equality reigns here
Save for one House of State beneath whose roof
A rural Lord . . . . 1827.

[2] 1827.
Under his spiritual sway, collected round him
In this sequestered Realm. He hath vouchsafed 1814.

[3] 1827.
. . . . . his . . . 1814.

* See the note on the previous page.—Ed.

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And learning's solid dignity; though born
Of knightly race, nor wanting powerful friends.
Hither,[1] in prime of manhood, he withdrew
From academic bowers. He loved the spot—
Who does not love his native soil?—he prized
The ancient rural character, composed
Of simple manners, feelings unsuppresst
And undisguised, and strong and serious thought;
A character reflected in himself,
With such embellishment as well beseems
His rank and sacred function. This deep vale
Winds far in reaches hidden from our sight,
And one a turreted manorial hall
Adorns, in which the good Man's ancestors
Have dwelt through ages—Patrons of this Cure.
To them, and to his own judicious pains,[2]
The Vicar's dwelling, and the whole domain,
Owes that presiding aspect which might well
Attract your notice; statelier than could else
Have been bestowed, through[3] course of common chance,
On an unwealthy mountain Benefice."

---

[1] 1827.
This good to reap, these pleasures to secure,
Hither, ... 1814.

[2] 1836.
. . . . . . This deep vale
Is lengthened out by many a winding reach,
Not visible to us; and one of these
A turretted manorial Hall adorns;
In which the good Man's Ancestors have dwelt
From age to age, the Patrons of this Cure.
To them, and to his decorating hand, 1814.

To them, and to his own judicious hand, MS.

. . . . . . This deep vale
Winds far in reaches hidden from our eyes, 1827.

[3] 1827.
. . . . . in . . . . . 1814.

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This said, oft pausing,[1] we pursued our way;
Nor reached the village-churchyard * till the sun
Travelling at steadier pace than ours, had risen
Above the summits of the highest hills,
And round our path darted oppressive beams.

As chanced, the portals of the sacred Pile
Stood open; and we entered. On my frame,
At such transition from the fervid air,
A grateful coolness fell, that seemed to strike
The heart, in concert with that temperate awe
And natural reverence which the place inspired.†
Not raised in [2] nice proportions was the pile;
But large and massy; for duration built;
With pillars crowded, and the roof upheld
By naked rafters intricately crossed,
Like leafless underboughs, in some thick wood,[3]
All withered by the depth of shade above.
Admonitory texts inscribed the walls,
Each, in its ornamental scroll, enclosed;
Each also crowned with winged heads—a pair
Of rudely-painted Cherubim. The floor
Of nave and aisle, in unpretending guise,
Was occupied by oaken benches ranged
In seemly rows; the chancel only showed
Some vain distinctions, marks of earthly state

[1] 1836.
. . . halting, ... 1814.

[2] 1827.
Not framed to . . . . . . 1814.
Nor shaped in . . . . MS.

[3] 1845.
. . . . in some thick grove, 1814.
. . . . mid some thick grove, 1827.

* Grasmere.—Ed.
† Compare Lamb's remarks in reference to Harrow Church in a letter to Wordsworth, August 14, 1814. See *Letters of Charles Lamb*, edited by Canon Ainger, vol. i. p. 272.—Ed.

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By immemorial privilege allowed;
Though with the Encincture's special sanctity
But ill according. An heraldic shield,
Varying its tincture with the changeful light,
Imbued the altar-window; fixed aloft
A faded hatchment hung, and one by time
Yet undiscoloured.[1] A capacious pew
Of sculptured oak stood here, with drapery lined;
And marble monuments were here displayed
Thronging the walls;[2] and on the floor beneath
Sepulchral stones appeared, with emblems graven
And foot-worn epitaphs, and some with small
And shining effigies of brass inlaid.*

---

[1] 1845.

. . . . . the chancel only shewed
Some inoffensive marks of earthly state
And vain distinction. . . . . 1814.

The Chancel only shewed
So privileged of yore, without offence
To piety, some marks of earthly state
And vain distinction,
Allowed by ancient privilege; though in sooth
With the pure sanctity the place should breathe
But ill according. A capacious pew
Of sculptured oak stood here, with drapery lined
And curtained closely round. Obnoxious less
To blame or unavoidable regret,
A high fixed hatchment, time-discoloured, told
Of man's mortality and its own decay. C.

Some vain distinctions, an heraldic shield,
In tincture varying as the sun might shine,
Imbued its eastern window, and aloft
A faded hatchment hung, and one by time
Yet undiscoloured, marks of earthly state. C.

[2] 1827.

Upon the walls; . . . . . . 1814.

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* The details of this description apply in most particulars to the Church at Grasmere, although some are probably borrowed from Wordsworth's recollections of Hawkshead and of Bowness. The "naked rafters intricately crossed," the "admonitory texts" inscribed on the walls,

Each, in its ornamental scroll, enclosed,

the "oaken benches," the "heraldic shield" in the "altar-window," the

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The tribute by these various records claimed,
Duly we paid, each after each, and read[1]
The ordinary chronicle of birth,
Office, alliance, and promotion—all
Ending in dust; of upright magistrates,
Grave doctors strenuous for the mother-church,
And uncorrupted senators, alike
To king and people true. A brazen plate,
Not easily deciphered, told of one
Whose course of earthly honour was begun
In quality of page among the train
Of the eighth Henry, when he crossed the seas
His royal state to show, and prove his strength
In tournament, upon the fields of France.
Another tablet registered the death,
And praised the gallant bearing, of a Knight
Tried in the sea-fights of the second Charles.
Near this brave Knight his father lay entombed;
And, to the silent language giving voice,
I read,—how in his manhood's earlier day
He, 'mid the afflictions of intestine war,
And rightful government subverted, found
One only solace—that he had espoused
A virtuous Lady tenderly beloved
For her benign perfections; and yet more
Endeared to him, for this,[2] that, in her state

---

[1] 1845.
Without reluctance did we pay; and read 1814.
We paid to each with due respect, C.

[2] 1827.
. . . . and for this
Yet more endeared to him, ... 1814.

"faded hatchment," the "marble monuments" and "sepulchral stones" with "emblems graven and foot-worn epitaphs,"—all are there. Grasmere Church was "for duration built," as Wordsworth puts it; and, however ill adapted to the wants of modern ceremonial, it is to be hoped that all that is most characteristic of the old edifice will be preserved; and that—while no building can retain its original form for ever—its renovation will not destroy what remains of that "rude and antique majesty," which Wordsworth tells us had, even in 1843, been partially impaired.—Ed.

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Of wedlock richly crowned with Heaven's regard,
She with a numerous issue filled his house,
Who throve, like plants, uninjured by the storm
That laid their country waste. No need to speak
Of less particular notices assigned
To Youth or Maiden gone before their time,
And Matrons and unwedded Sisters old;
Whose charity and goodness were rehearsed
In modest panegyric.
"These dim lines,
What would they tell?" said I,—but, from the task
Of puzzling out that faded narrative,
With whisper soft my venerable Friend
Called me; and, looking down the darksome aisle,
I saw the Tenant of the lonely vale
Standing apart; with curvèd arm reclined
On the baptismal font; his pallid face
Upturned, as if his mind were rapt, or lost
In some abstraction; gracefully he stood,
The semblance bearing of a sculptured form
That leans upon a monumental urn
In peace, from morn to night, from year to year.

Him from that posture did the Sexton rouse;
Who entered, humming carelessly a tune,*
Continuation haply of the notes
That had beguiled the work from which he came,
With spade and mattock o'er his shoulder hung;
To be deposited, for future need,
In their appointed place. The pale Recluse
Withdrew; and straight we followed,—to a spot
Where sun and shade were intermixed; for there
A broad oak, stretching forth its leafy arms
From an adjoining pasture, overhung

* Compare, in *Hamlet*, act v. scene i. l. 64—
Hamlet.—Has this fellow no feeling of his business? he sings at grave-making.
Horatio.—Custom hath made it in him a property of easiness.
Hamlet.—'Tis e'en so: the hand of little employment hath the daintier sense.—Ed.

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Small space of that green churchyard with a light
And pleasant awning.* On the moss-grown wall
My ancient Friend and I together took
Our seats; and thus the Solitary spake,
Standing before us:—
"Did you note the mien
Of that self-solaced, easy-hearted churl,
Death's hireling, who scoops out his neighbour's grave,
Or wraps an old acquaintance up in clay,
All unconcerned as he would bind a sheaf,
Or plant a tree.† And did you hear his voice?[1]
I was abruptly summoned by the sound[2]
From some affecting images and thoughts,
Which then were silent; but crave utterance now.

"Much," he continued, with dejected look,
"Much, yesterday,[3] was said in glowing phrase
Of our sublime dependencies, and hopes
For future states of being; and the wings
Of speculation, joyfully outspread,
Hovered above our destiny on earth:
But stoop, and place the prospect of the soul

---

[1] 1836.
As unconcerned as when he plants a tree? 1814.

[2] 1836.
. . . . . . by his voice 1814.

[3] 1845.
. . . . images and thoughts,
And from the company of serious words.
Much, yesterday, ... 1814.

And from the company of serious words,
Which then were silent; but crave utterance now.
Much," he continued, with dejected looks,
"Much, yesterday, ... 1836.

---

* An oak now grows in the field a little to the east of the churchyard wall, which cannot, however, be that to which Wordsworth refers. Possibly an oak grew at that time beside the wall above the Rothay. The wall is still "moss-grown."—Ed.

† See the footnote on the previous page.—Ed.

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In sober contrast with reality,
And man's substantial life. If this mute earth
Of what it holds could speak, and every grave
Were as a volume, shut, yet capable
Of yielding its contents to eye and ear,
We should recoil, stricken with sorrow and shame,
To see disclosed, by such dread proof, how ill
That which is done accords with what is known
To reason, and by conscience is enjoined;
How idly, how perversely, life's whole course,
To this conclusion, deviates from the line,
Or of the end stops short, proposed to all
At her[1] aspiring outset.
"Mark the babe
Not long accustomed to this breathing world;
One that hath barely learned to shape a smile,
Though yet irrational of soul, to grasp
With tiny finger[2]—to let fall a tear;
And, as the heavy cloud of sleep dissolves,
To stretch his limbs, bemocking, as might seem,
The outward functions of intelligent man;
A grave proficient in amusive feats
Of puppetry, that from the lap declare
His expectations, and announce his claims
To that inheritance which millions rue
That they were ever born to! In due time
A day of solemn ceremonial comes;
When they, who for this Minor hold in trust
Rights that transcend the loftiest[3] heritage
Of mere humanity, present their Charge,

[1] 1827.
At its . . . . 1814.

[2] 1836.
With tiny fingers, ... 1814.

[3] 1845.
. . . . . unblest . . 1814.
. . . . . humblest . . 1827.

For this occasion daintily adorned,
At the baptismal font. And when the pure
And consecrating element hath cleansed
The original stain, the child is there received
Into the second ark, Christ's church, with trust
That he, from wrath redeemed, therein shall float
Over the billows of this troublesome world
To the fair land of everlasting life.
Corrupt affections, covetous desires,
Are all renounced; high as the thought of man
Can carry virtue, virtue is professed;
A dedication made, a promise given
For due provision to control and guide,
And unremitting progress to ensure
In holiness and truth."

"You cannot blame,"
Here interposing fervently I said,
"Rites which attest that Man by nature lies
Bedded for good and evil in a gulf
Fearfully low; nor will your judgment scorn
Those services, whereby attempt is made
To lift the creature toward[1] that eminence
On which, now fallen, erewhile in majesty
He stood; or if not so, whose top serene
At least he feels 'tis given him to descry;
Not without aspirations, evermore
Returning, and injunctions from within
Doubt to cast off and weariness; in trust
That what the Soul perceives, if glory lost,
May be, through pains and persevering hope,
Recovered; or, if hitherto unknown,
Lies within reach, and one day shall be gained."

"I blame them not," he calmly answered—"no;
The outward ritual and established forms

[1] 1827.
. . . . tow'rds . . . . 1814.

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With which communities of men invest
These inward feelings, and the aspiring vows
To which the lips give public utterance
Are both a natural process; and by me
Shall pass uncensured; though the issue prove,
Bringing from age to age its own reproach,
Incongruous, impotent, and blank.—But, oh!
If to be weak is to be wretched—miserable,*
As the lost Angel by a human voice
Hath mournfully pronounced, then, in my mind,
Far better not to move at all than move
By impulse sent from such illusive power,—
That finds and cannot fasten down; that grasps
And is rejoiced, and loses while it grasps;
That tempts, emboldens—for a time sustains,[1]
And then betrays; accuses and inflicts
Remorseless punishment; and so retreads
The inevitable circle; better far
Than this, to graze the herb in thoughtless peace,
By foresight or remembrance, undisturbed!

"Philosophy! and thou more vaunted name
Religion! with thy statelier retinue,
Faith, Hope, and Charity—from the visible world
Choose for your emblems whatsoe'er ye find
Of safest guidance or[2] of firmest trust—
The torch, the star, the anchor; nor except
The cross itself, at whose unconscious feet
The generations of mankind have knelt

---

[1] 1836.
. . . . doth a while sustain, 1814.

[2] 1845.
. . . . and . . . 1814.

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* Compare *Paradise Lost*, book i. l. 157—

To be weak is miserable,
Doing or suffering. ED.

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Ruefully seized, and shedding bitter tears,
And through that conflict seeking rest—of you,
High-titled Powers, am I constrained to ask,
Here standing, with the unvoyageable sky
In faint reflection of infinitude
Stretched overhead, and at my pensive feet
A subterraneous magazine of bones,
In whose dark vaults my own shall soon be laid,
Where are your triumphs? your dominion where?
And in what age admitted and confirmed?
—Not for a happy land do I enquire,
Island or grove, that hides a blessed few
Who, with obedience willing and sincere,
To your serene authorities conform;
But whom, I ask, of individual Souls,
Have ye withdrawn from passion's crooked ways,
Inspired, and thoroughly fortified?—If the heart
Could be inspected to its inmost folds
By sight undazzled with the glare of praise,
Who shall be named—in the resplendent line
Of sages, martyrs, confessors—the man
Whom the best might of faith, wherever fix'd,[1]
For one day's little compass, has preserved
From painful and discreditable shocks
Of contradiction, from some vague desire
Culpably cherished, or corrupt relapse
To some unsanctioned fear?"
"If this be so,
And Man," said I, "be in his noblest shape
Thus pitiably infirm; then, he who made,
And who shall judge the creature, will forgive.
—Yet, in its general tenor, your complaint
Is all too true; and surely not misplaced:
For, from this pregnant spot of ground, such thoughts

[1] 1845.
Whom the best might of Conscience, Truth, and
Hope, 1814.

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Rise to the notice of a serious mind
By natural exhalation. With the dead
In their repose, the living in their mirth,
Who can reflect, unmoved, upon the round
Of smooth and solemnized complacencies,
By which, on Christian lands, from age to age
Profession mocks performance? Earth is sick,
And Heaven is weary, of the hollow words
Which States and Kingdoms utter when they talk
Of truth and justice. Turn to private life
And social neighbourhood; look we to ourselves;
A light of duty shines on every day
For all; and yet how few are warmed or cheered!
How few who mingle with their fellow-men
And still remain self-governed, and apart,
Like this our honoured Friend; and thence acquire
Right to expect his vigorous decline,
That promises to the end a blest old age!"

"Yet," with a smile of triumph thus exclaimed
The Solitary, "in the life of man,
If to the poetry of common speech
Faith may be given, we see as in a glass
A true reflection of the circling year,
With all its seasons. Grant that Spring is there,
In spite of many a rough untoward blast,
Hopeful and promising with buds and flowers;
Yet where is glowing Summer's long rich day,
That *ought* to follow faithfully expressed?
And mellow Autumn, charged with bounteous fruit,
Where is she imaged? in what favoured clime
Her lavish pomp, and ripe magnificence?
—Yet, while the better part is missed, the worse
In man's autumnal season is set forth
With a resemblance not to be denied,
And that contents him; bowers that hear no more
The voice of gladness, less and less supply
Of outward sunshine and internal warmth;

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And, with this change, sharp air and falling leaves,
Foretelling aged Winter's desolate sway.[1]

"How gay the habitations that bedeck[2]
This fertile valley! Not a house but seems
To give assurance of content within;*
Embosomed happiness, and placid love;
As if the sunshine of the day were met
With answering brightness in the hearts of all
Who walk this favoured ground. But chance-regards,
And notice forced upon incurious ears;
These, if these only, acting in despite

[1] 1845.

Foretelling total Winter, blank and cold.	1814.
Foretelling aged Winter's dreary sway.	1840.
Prelude to coming Winter's desolate sway.	C.

[2] 1827.

. . . . . . adorn	1814.

* Compare Wordsworth's *Description of the Scenery of the Lakes*, section 2. "To begin with the COTTAGES. They are scattered over the vallies, and under the hill sides, and on the rocks; and, even to this day, in the more retired dales, without any intrusion of more assuming buildings;

> Clustered like stars some few, but single most,
> And lurking dimly in their shy retreats,
> Or glancing on each other cheerful looks,
> Like separated stars with clouds between.

The dwelling-houses, and contiguous outhouses, are, in many instances, of the colour of the native rock, out of which they have been built. . . . These humble dwellings remind the contemplative spectator of a production of nature, and may (using a strong expression) rather be said to have grown than to have been erected;—to have risen, by an instinct of their own, out of the native rock—so little is there in them of formality, such is their wildness and beauty! Among the numerous recesses and projections in the walls and in the different stages of their roofs, are seen bold and harmonious effects of contrasted sunshine and shadow. . . . These dwellings, mostly built, as has been said, of rough unhewn stone, are roofed with slates . . . rough and uneven in their surfaces, so that both the coverings and sides of the houses have furnished places of rest for the seeds of lichens, mosses, ferns, and flowers. Hence buildings, which, in their very form call to mind the processes of nature, do thus, clothed with this vegetable garb, appear to be received into the bosom of the living principle of things, as it acts and exists among the woods and fields."

Compare also Gray's description of the Vale of Grasmere in his Journal:—"Not a single red tile, nor flaring gentleman's house, or garden-wall, breaks in upon the repose of this little unsuspected paradise; but all is peace, rusticity, and happy poverty, in its neatest and most becoming attire."—ED.

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Of the encomiums by my Friend pronounced
On humble life, forbid the judging mind
To trust the smiling aspect of this fair
And noiseless commonwealth. The simple race
Of mountaineers (by nature's self removed
From foul temptations, and by constant care
Of a good shepherd tended as themselves
Do tend their flocks) partake man's general lot [1]
With little mitigation. They escape,
Perchance, the heavier woes of guilt; feel not [2]
The tedium of fantastic idleness:
Yet life, as with the multitude, with them
Is fashioned like an ill-constructed tale;
That on the outset wastes its gay desires,
Its fair adventures, its enlivening hopes,
And pleasant interests—for the sequel leaving
Old things repeated with diminished grace;
And all the laboured novelties at best
Imperfect substitutes, whose use and power
Evince the want and weakness whence they spring."

While in this serious mood we held discourse,
The reverend Pastor toward [3] the church-yard gate
Approached; and, with a mild respectful air
Of native cordiality, our Friend
Advanced to greet him. With a gracious mien
Was he received, and mutual joy prevailed.
Awhile they stood in conference, and I guess
That he, who now upon the mossy wall
Sate by my side, had vanished, if a wish
Could have transferred him to the flying clouds,

[1] 1827.
Do tend their flocks, These share Man's general lot 1814.

[2] 1836.
Perchance, guilt's heavier woes; and do not feel 1814.

[3] 1827.
. . . . tow'rds . . . . 1814.

Or the least penetrable hiding-place
In his own valley's rocky guardianship.[1]
—For me, I looked upon the pair, well pleased:
Nature had framed them both, and both were marked
By circumstance, with intermixture fine
Of contrast and resemblance. To an oak
Hardy and grand, a weather-beaten oak,
Fresh in the strength and majesty of age,
One might be likened: flourishing appeared,
Though somewhat past the fulness of his prime,
The other—like a stately sycamore,*
That spreads, in gentle[2] pomp, its honied shade.

A general greeting was exchanged; and soon
The Pastor learned that his approach had given
A welcome interruption to discourse
Grave, and in truth too[3] often sad.—"Is Man
A child of hope? Do generations press
On generations, without progress made?
Halts the individual, ere his hairs be grey,
Perforce? Are we a creature in whom good
Preponderates, or evil? Doth the will

[1] 1836.
Could have transferred him to his lonely House
Within the circuit of those guardian rocks. 1814.

[2] 1836.
. . . gentler . . . . 1814.

[3] 1827.
. . . . full . . . . 1814.

* "To illustrate the relation which in my mind this Pastor bore to the Wanderer, and the resemblances between them, or rather the points of community in their nature, I likened one to an oak, and the other to a sycamore; and having here referred to this comparison, I need only add, I had no one individual in my mind, wishing rather to embody this idea than to break in upon the simplicity of it by traits of individual character, or of any peculiarity of opinion."—I. F.

The sycamore is the favourite tree at the Mountain Farms of Cumberland and Westmoreland, as it affords the best shelter from rain, and the most thorough protection from the heat of the sun, during sheep-shearing. A special feature of the valley as you go down Langdale from Blea Tarn, is the abundance of sycamore; some of the farm-houses are literally *embowered* by it.—Ed.

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Acknowledge reason's law? A living power
Is virtue, or no better than a name,
Fleeting as health or beauty, and unsound?
So that the only substance which remains,
(For thus the tenor of complaint hath run)
Among so many shadows, are the pains
And penalties of miserable life,
Doomed to decay, and then expire in dust!
—Our cogitations this way have been drawn,
These are the points," the Wanderer said, "on which
Our inquest turns.—Accord, good Sir! the light
Of your experience to dispel this gloom:
By your persuasive wisdom shall the heart
That frets, or languishes, be stilled and cheered.

"Our nature," said the Priest, in mild reply,
"Angels may weigh and fathom: they perceive,
With undistempered and unclouded spirit,
The object as it is; but, for ourselves,
That speculative height *we* may not reach.
The good and evil are our own; and we
Are that which we would contemplate from far.
Knowledge, for us, is difficult to gain—
Is difficult to gain, and hard to keep—
As virtue's self; like virtue is beset
With snares; tried, tempted, subject to decay.
Love, admiration, fear, desire, and hate,
Blind were we without these; through these alone
Are capable to notice or discern
Or to record; we judge, but cannot be
Indifferent judges. 'Spite of proudest boast,
Reason, best reason, is to imperfect man
An effort only, and a noble aim;
A crown, an attribute of sovereign power,
Still to be courted—never to be won.
—Look forth, or each man dive into himself;
What sees he but a creature too perturbed;
That is transported to excess; that yearns,

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Regrets, or trembles, wrongly, or too much;
Hopes rashly, in disgust as rash recoils;
Battens on spleen, or moulders in despair?
Thus comprehension fails, and truth is missed;
Thus darkness[1] and delusion round our path
Spread, from disease, whose subtle injury lurks
Within the very faculty of sight.

"Yet for the general purposes of faith
In Providence, for solace and support,
We may not doubt that who can best subject
The will to reason's law, can[2] strictliest live
And act in that obedience, he shall gain
The clearest apprehension of those truths,
Which unassisted reason's utmost power
Is too infirm to reach. But, waiving this,
And our regards confining within bounds
Of less exalted consciousness, through which
The very multitude are free to range,
We safely may affirm that human life
Is either fair and[3] tempting, a soft scene
Grateful to sight, refreshing to the soul,
Or a forbidden[4] tract of cheerless view;
Even as the same is looked at, or approached.
Thus, when in changeful April fields are white
With new-fallen snow, if from the sullen north
Your walk conduct you hither, ere the sun

[1] 1836.
Thus truth is missed, and comprehension fails;
And darkness . . . . . . 1814.

[2] 1836.
. . . . . and . . . 1814.

[3] 1827.
. . . . or . . . . . 1814.

[4] 1820.
. . forbidding . . . . . . 1814.

The texts of 1827 to 1843 and that of 1847 return to the text of 1814.

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Hath gained his noontide height, this churchyard, filled
With mounds[1] transversely lying side by side
From east to west, before you will appear
An unillumined, blank, and dreary, plain,[2]
With more than wintry cheerlessness and gloom
Saddening the heart. Go forward, and look back;
Look,[3] from the quarter whence the lord of light,
Of life, of love, and gladness doth dispense
His beams; which, unexcluded in their fall,
Upon the southern side of every grave
Have gently exercised a melting power;
Then will a vernal prospect greet your eye,
All fresh and beautiful, and green and bright,
Hopeful and cheerful:—vanished is the pall
That overspread and chilled the sacred turf,

---

[1] 1836.

. . . . or approached.
Permit me," said the Priest continuing, "here
To use an illustration of my thought,
Drawn from the very spot on which we stand.
—In changeful April, when, as he is wont,
Winter has reassumed a short lived sway
And whitened all the surface of the fields,
If—from the sullen region of the North
Towards the circuit of this holy ground
Your walk conducts you, ere the vigorous sun,
High climbing, hath attained his noon-tide height—
These Mounds, ... 1814.

Thus, when in changeful April snow has fallen,
And fields are white, if from the sullen north
Your walk conduct you hither, ere the Sun
Hath gained his noontide height, this churchyard, filled
With mounds . . . . 1827.

. . . . ere vigorous sun MS.

[2] 1827.

A dreary plain of unillumined snow, 1814.

[3] 1827.

. . . Go forward, and look back;
On the same circuit of this church-yard ground
Look, ... 1814.

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Vanished or hidden;[1] and the whole domain,
To some, too lightly minded, might appear
A meadow carpet for the dancing hours.*
—This contrast, not unsuitable to life,
Is to that other state more apposite,
Death and its two-fold aspect! wintry—one,
Cold, sullen, blank, from hope and joy shut out;
The other, which the ray divine hath touched,
Replete with vivid promise, bright as spring."

"We see, then, as we feel," the Wanderer thus
With a complacent animation spake,
"And in your judgment, Sir! the mind's repose
On evidence is not to be ensured
By act of naked reason. Moral truth
Is no mechanic structure, built by rule;
And which, once built, retains a stedfast shape
And undisturbed proportions; but a thing
Subject, you deem, to vital accidents;
And, like the water-lily, lives and thrives,
Whose root is fixed in stable earth, whose head
Floats on the tossing waves. With joy sincere
I re-salute these sentiments confirmed
By your authority. But how acquire
The inward principle that gives effect
To outward argument; the passive will
Meek to admit; the active energy,
Strong and unbounded to embrace, and firm
To keep and cherish? how shall man unite
With[2] self-forgetting tenderness of heart

[1] 1836.
Hopeful and cheerful:—vanished is the snow,
Vanished or hidden; . . . . . . 1814.

[2] 1827.
A . . . . 1814.

* The group of meditative talkers are supposed to be seated on the moss-grown wall to the east of the Churchyard, facing Silver How.—Ed.

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An [1] earth-despising dignity of soul?
Wise in that union, and without it blind!"

"The way," said I, "to court, if not obtain
The ingenuous mind, apt to be set aright;
This, in tho lonely dell discoursing, you
Declared at large; and by what exercise
From visible nature, or the inner self
Power may be trained, and renovation brought
To those who need the gift. But, after all,
Is aught so certain as that man is doomed
To breathe beneath a vault of ignorance?
The natural roof of that dark house in which
His soul is pent! How little can be known—
This is the wise man's sigh; how far we err—
This is the good man's not unfrequent pang!
And they perhaps err least, the lowly class
Whom a benign necessity compels
To follow reason's least ambitious course;
Such do I mean who, unperplexed by doubt,
And unincited by a wish to look
Into high objects farther than they may,
Pace to and fro, from morn till even-tide,
The narrow avenue of daily toil
For daily bread."
"Yes," buoyantly exclaimed
The pale Recluse—"praise to the sturdy plough,
And patient spade; praise to the simple crook,[2]
And ponderous loom—resounding while it holds
Body and mind in one captivity;
And let the light mechanic tool be hailed
With honour; which, encasing by the power
Of long companionship, the artist's hand,

---

[1] 1827.
And . . . . 1814.

[2] 1836.
. . spade, and shepherd's simple crook, 1814.

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Cuts off that hand, with all its world of nerves,
From a too busy commerce with the heart!
—Inglorious implements of craft and toil,
Both ye that shape and build, and ye that force,
By slow solicitation, earth to yield
Her annual bounty, sparingly dealt forth
With wise reluctance; you would I extol,
Not for gross good alone which ye produce,
But for the impertinent and ceaseless strife
Of proofs and reasons ye preclude—in those
Who to your dull society are born,
And with their humble birthright rest content.
—Would I had ne'er renounced it!"
A slight flush
Of moral anger previously had tinged
The old Man's cheek; but, at this closing turn
Of self-reproach, it passed away. Said he,
"That which we feel we utter; as we think
So have we argued; reaping for our pains
No visible recompense. For our relief
You," to the Pastor turning thus he spake,
"Have kindly interposed. May I entreat
Your further help? The mine of real life
Dig for us; and present us, in the shape
Of virgin ore, that gold which we, by pains
Fruitless as those of aëry alchemists,
Seek from the torturing crucible. There lies
Around us a domain where you have long
Watched both the outward course and inner heart:[1]
Give us, for our abstractions, solid facts;
For our disputes, plain pictures. Say what man
He is who cultivates yon hanging field;
What qualities of mind she bears, who comes,
For morn and evening service, with her pail,

[1] 1827.
. . . . where You have long
Held spiritual sway, have guided and consoled,
And watched the outward course and inner heart. 1814.

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To that green pasture;* place before our sight
The family who dwell within yon house
Fenced round with glittering laurel;† or in that
Below, from which the curling smoke ascends.
Or rather, as we stand on holy earth,
And have the dead around us,‡ take from them
Your instances; for they are both best known,
And by frail man most equitably judged.
Epitomise the life; pronounce, you can,
Authentic epitaphs on some of these
Who, from their lowly mansions hither brought,
Beneath this turf lie mouldering at our feet:
So, by your records, may our doubts be solved;
And so, not searching higher, we may learn
To prize the breath we share with human kind;
And look upon the dust of man with awe."[1]

The Priest replied—"An office you impose
For which peculiar requisites are mine;
Yet much, I feel, is wanting—else the task
Would be most grateful. True indeed it is
That they whom death has hidden from our sight
Are worthiest of the mind's regard; with these
The future cannot contradict the past:
Mortality's last exercise and proof
Is undergone; the transit made that shows
The very Soul, revealed as she[2] departs.
Yet, on your first suggestion, will I give,
Ere we descend into these silent vaults,
One picture from the living.
"You behold,

[1] Italics were first used in 1827.

[2] 1827.
. . . . . . it . . 1814.

* Possibly at Dale End, Grasmere.—Ed.
† Probably the Wyke, Sarah Mackereth's Cottage.—Ed.
‡ See Wordsworth's note, p. 388.—Ed.

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High on the breast of yon dark mountain, dark
With stony barrenness,* a shining speck
Bright as a sunbeam sleeping till a shower
Brush it away, or cloud pass over it;
And such it might be deemed—a sleeping sunbeam;
But 'tis a plot of cultivated ground,
Cut off, an island in the dusky waste;
And that attractive brightness is its own.
The lofty site, by nature framed to tempt
Amid a wilderness of rocks and stones
The tiller's hand, a hermit might have chosen,
For opportunity presented, thence
Far forth to send his wandering eye o'er land
And ocean, and look down upon the works,
The habitations, and the ways of men,
Himself unseen! But no tradition tells
That ever hermit dipped his maple dish
In the sweet spring that lurks 'mid yon green fields;
And no such visionary views belong
To those who occupy and till the ground,
High on that mountain where they long have dwelt[1]

---

[1] 1845.
And on the bosom of the mountain dwell— 1814.

---

* Silver How is the only "dark mountain" visible to the west from the moss-grown seat in the Grasmere Churchyard; but here again the realism of the narrative gives way, and not Silver How but Lingmoor is described, with Hackett Cottage at its south-eastern foot. The Fenwick note is here explicit. "First for the one picture given by the Wanderer of the living. In this nothing is introduced but what was taken from nature and real life. The cottage was called Hackett, and stands, as described, on the southern extremity of the ridge which separates the two Langdales. The pair who inhabited it were called Jonathan and Betty Yewdale." Later on, in book vi. p. 250, Wordsworth describes the blue roofs of Hawkshead village as ornamenting

a distant reach
Of this far-winding vale.

Unless, therefore, he is speaking in the vague, Hackett and not Grasmere is the place described. The Fenwick note to the *Epistle to Sir George Beaumont*, however, decides the question (see vol. iv. p. 256). "The house (Hackett) and its inmates are referred to in the fifth book of *The Excursion*, in the passage beginning—

You behold,
High on the breast of yon dark mountain, dark." Ed.

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A wedded pair in childless solitude.
A house of stones collected on the spot,
By rude hands built, with rocky knolls in front,
Backed also by a ledge of rock, whose crest
Of birch-trees waves over the chimney top;
A rough abode—in colour, shape, and size,[1]
Such as in unsafe times of border-war
Might have been wished for and contrived, to elude
The eye of roving plunderer—for their need
Suffices; and unshaken bears the assault
Of their most dreaded foe, the strong South-west
In anger blowing from the distant sea.
—Alone within her solitary hut;
There, or within the compass of her fields,
At any moment may the Dame be found,
True as the stock-dove to her shallow nest
And to the grove that holds it. She beguiles
By intermingled work of house and field
The summer's day, and winter's; with success
Not equal, but sufficient to maintain,
Even at the worst, a smooth stream of content,
Until the expected hour at which her Mate
From the far-distant quarry's vault returns;
And by his converse crowns a silent day
With evening cheerfulness. In powers of mind,
In scale of culture, few among my flock[2]
Hold lower rank than this sequestered pair:
But true humility descends from heaven;[3]

---

[1] 1836.

. . . . above the chimney top;
In shape, in size, and colour, an abode 1814.

. . . . above the chimney top:
A rough abode—in colour, shape, and size, 1827.

[2] 1814.

Few only in the scale of culture, hold
Among my flock . . . . . . C.

[3] 1845.

But humbleness of heart descends from heaven; 1814.

And that best gift of heaven hath fallen on them;
Abundant recompense for every want.
—Stoop from your height, ye proud, and copy these!
Who, in their noiseless dwelling-place, can hear
The voice of wisdom whispering scripture texts
For the mind's government, or temper's peace;
And recommending for their mutual need,
Forgiveness, patience, hope, and charity!"

"Much was I pleased," the grey-haired Wanderer said,
"When to those shining fields our notice first
You turned; and yet more pleased have from your lips
Gathered this fair report of them[1] who dwell
In that retirement; whither, by such course
Of evil hap and good as oft awaits
A tired way-faring man, once *I* was brought
While traversing alone yon mountain pass.
Dark on my road the autumnal evening fell,[2]
And night succeeded with unusual gloom,[3]
So hazardous that feet and hands became[4]
Guides better than mine eyes—until a light
High in the gloom appeared, too high, methought,
For human habitation; but I longed
To reach it, destitute of other hope.
I looked with steadiness as sailors look
On the north star, or watch-tower's distant lamp,

---

[1] 1827.
. . . . . . those . . 1814.

[2] 1836.
A lone way-faring Man, I once was brought.
Dark on my road the autumnal evening fell
While I was traversing yon mountain-pass, 1814.

[3] 1814.
And with the night succeeded a thick gloom, C.

[4] 1845.
So that my feet and hands at length became 1814.

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And saw the light—now fixed—and shifting now—*
Not like a dancing meteor, but in line
Of never-varying motion, to and fro.
It is no night-fire of the naked hills,
Thought I [1]—some friendly covert must be near.
With this persuasion thitherward my steps
I turn, and reach at last the guiding light;
Joy to myself! but to the heart of her
Who there was standing on the open hill,
(The same kind Matron whom your tongue hath praised)
Alarm and disappointment! The alarm
Ceased, when she learned through what mishap I came,
And by what help had gained those distant fields.
Drawn from her cottage, on that aëry [2] height,
Bearing a lantern in her hand she stood,
Or paced the ground—to guide her Husband home,
By that unwearied signal, kenned afar; †
An anxious duty! which the lofty site,
Traversed but by a few irregular paths,[3]
Imposes, whensoe'er untoward chance
Detains him after his accustomed hour
Till night lies black upon the ground. 'But come,

---

[1] 1827.
Said I, ... 1814.

[2] 1836.
. . . . open . 1814.

[3] 1827.
. . . . . which the lofty Site,
Far from all public road or beaten way
And traversed only by a few faint paths, 1814.

---

* Compare the Sonnet (of 1815) referring to Allan Bank, beginning—

Even as a dragon's eye that feels the stress
Of a bedimming sleep, or as a lamp
Suddenly glaring through sepulchral damp,
So burns yon Taper 'mid a black recess
Of mountains, silent, dreary, motionless, etc. ED.

† Compare the Sonnet (of 1815) beginning—

The fairest, brightest, hues of ether fade,

and more especially the Fenwick note, prefixed to that sonnet.—ED.

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Come,' said the Matron, 'to our poor abode;
Those dark rocks hide it!'[1] Entering, I beheld
A blazing fire—beside a cleanly hearth
Sate down; and to her office, with leave asked,
The Dame returned.
"Or ere[2] that glowing pile
Of mountain turf required the builder's hand
Its wasted splendour to repair, the door
Opened, and she re-entered with glad looks,
Her Helpmate following. Hospitable fare,
Frank conversation, made the evening's treat:
Need a bewildered traveller wish for more?
But more was given; I studied as we sate
By the bright fire, the good Man's form, and face
Not less than beautiful;[3] an open brow
Of undisturbed humanity; a cheek
Suffused with something of a feminine hue;*

---

[1] 1832.
(Such chance is rare) detains him till the night
Falls black upon the hills. "But come," she said,
"Come let me lead you to our poor Abode.
Behind those rocks it stands, as if it shunned,
In churlishness, the eye of all mankind;
But the few Guests who seek the door receive
Most hearty welcome."— . . . . . 1814.

Detains him after his accustomed hour
When night lies black upon the hills. 'But come,
1827.

[2] 1827.
. . . . . Before . . . . 1814.

[3] 1845.
But more was given; the eye, the mind, the heart,
Found exercise in noting, as we sate
By the bright fire, the good Man's face—composed
Of features elegant; . . . . . . 1814.

But more was given; I studied as we sate 1827.

---

* This feminine complexion of the Cumbrian peasants who work in the higher mines, is probably in part due to the continual mists and moisture of the heights. It has been observed especially amongst the workers in the high slate quarries at Walna Scar.—Ed.

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Eyes beaming courtesy and mild regard;
But, in the quicker turns of the discourse,
Expression slowly varying, that evinced
A tardy apprehension. From a fount
Lost, thought I, in the obscurities of time,
But honoured once, those[1] features and that mien
May have descended, though I see them here.
In such a man, so gentle and subdued,
Withal so graceful in his gentleness,
A race illustrious for heroic deeds,
Humbled, but not degraded, may expire.
This pleasing fancy (cherished and upheld
By sundry recollections of such fall
From high to low, ascent from low to high,
As books record, and even the careless mind
Cannot but notice among men and things)
Went with me to the place of my repose.[2]

"Roused by the crowing cock at dawn of day,
I yet had risen too late to interchange
A morning salutation with my Host,
Gone forth already to the far-off seat
Of his day's work. 'Three dark mid-winter months
'Pass,' said the Matron, 'and I never see,
'Save when the sabbath brings its kind release,
'My helpmate's face by light of day. He quits
'His door in darkness, nor till dusk returns.
'And, through Heaven's[3] blessing, thus we gain the bread
'For which we pray; and for the wants provide
'Of sickness, accident, and helpless age.

---

[1] 1836.
. . . these . . . . . . 1814.

[2] 1814.
Sweetened for me our mutual good night
Nor left me on a lonely pillow stretched
Till slumber had given way to dreamless sleep. C.

[3] 1814.
. . God's . . . . C.

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‘Companions have I many; many friends,
‘Dependants, comforters—my wheel, my fire,
‘All day the house-clock ticking in mine ear,
‘The cackling hen, the tender chicken brood,
‘And the wild birds that gather round my porch.
‘This honest sheep-dog's countenance I read;
‘With him can talk; nor blush to [1] waste a word
‘On creatures less intelligent and shrewd.
‘And if the blustering wind that drives the clouds
‘Care not for me, he lingers round my door,
‘And makes me pastime when our tempers suit;—
‘But, above all, my thoughts are my support,
‘My comfort:—would that they were oftener fixed
‘On what, for guidance in the way that leads
‘To heaven, I know, by my Redeemer taught.’
The Matron ended [2]—nor could I forbear
To exclaim—‘O happy! yielding to the law
Of these privations, richer in the main!—
While thankless thousands are opprest and clogged
By ease and leisure; by the very wealth
And pride of opportunity made poor;
While tens of thousands falter in their path,
And sink, through utter want of cheering light;
For you the hours of labour do not flag;
For you each evening hath its shining star,
And every sabbath-day its golden sun.’”

“Yes!” said the Solitary with a smile
That seemed to break from an expanding heart,
“The untutored bird may found, and so construct,
And with such soft materials line, her nest
Fixed in the centre of a prickly brake,

---

[1] 1820.
. . . . nor seldom . . . 1814.

[2] 1845.
“‘—But, above all, my Thoughts are my support.”
The Matron ended— . . . . . . 1814.

That the thorns wound her not; they only guard.
Powers not unjustly likened to those gifts
Of happy instinct which the woodland bird
Shares with her species, nature's grace sometimes
Upon the individual doth confer,
Among her[1] higher creatures born and trained
To use of reason. And, I own that, tired
Of the ostentatious world—a swelling stage
With empty actions and vain passions stuffed,
And from the private struggles of mankind
Hoping far[2] less than I could wish to hope,
Far less than once I trusted and believed—
I love to hear of those, who, not contending
Nor summoned to contend for virtue's prize,
Miss not the humbler good at which they aim,
Blest with a kindly faculty to blunt
The edge of adverse circumstance, and turn
Into their contraries the petty plagues
And hindrances with which they stand beset.
In early youth, among my native hills,
I knew a Scottish Peasant who possessed
A few small crofts of stone-encumbered ground;
Masses of every shape and size, that lay
Scattered about under[3] the mouldering walls
Of a rough precipice; and some, apart,
In quarters unobnoxious to such chance,
As if the moon had showered them down in spite.
But he repined not. Though the plough was scared
By these obstructions, 'round the shady stones
A fertilising moisture,' said the Swain,
'Gathers, and is preserved; and feeding dews

---

[1] 1827.
. . the . . . . . . 1814.

[2] 1836.
. . for . . . . 1814.

[3] 1832.
. . . beneath . . . . . 1814.

'And damps, through all the droughty summer day
'From out their substance issuing, maintain
'Herbage that never fails: no grass springs up
'So green, so fresh, so plentiful, as mine!'
But[1] thinly sown these natures; rare, at least,
The mutual aptitude of seed and soil
That yields such kindly product. He, whose bed
Perhaps yon loose sods cover, the poor Pensioner
Brought yesterday from our sequestered dell
Here to lie down in lasting quiet, he,
If living now, could otherwise report
Of rustic loneliness: that grey-haired Orphan—
So call him, for humanity to him
No parent was—feelingly could[2] have told,
In life, in death, what solitude can breed
Of selfishness, and cruelty, and vice;
Or, if it breed not, hath not power to cure.
—But your compliance, Sir! with our request
My words too long have hindered."
Undeterred,
Perhaps incited rather, by these shocks,
In no ungracious opposition, given
To the confiding spirit of his own
Experienced faith, the reverend Pastor said,
Around him looking; "Where shall I begin?
Who shall be first selected from my flock
Gathered together in their peaceful fold?"
He paused—and having lifted up his eyes
To the pure heaven, he cast them down again
Upon the earth beneath his feet; and spake:—

---

[1] 1827.
. . . . . so plentiful, as mine!"
See, in this well conditioned Soul, a Third
To match with your good Couple that put forth
Their homely graces on the mountain side.
But . . . . 1814.

[2] 1832.
. . . . could feelingly . . 1814.

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"To a mysteriously-united pair[1]
This place is consecrate; to Death and Life,
And to the best affections that proceed
From their conjunction; consecrate to faith
In him who bled for man upon the cross;
Hallowed to revelation; and no less[2]
To reason's mandates; and the hopes divine
Of pure imagination;—above all,
To charity, and love, that have provided,
Within these precincts, a capacious bed
And receptacle, open to the good
And evil, to the just and the unjust;
In which they find an equal resting-place:
Even as the multitude of kindred brooks
And streams, whose murmur fills this hollow vale,
Whether their course be turbulent or smooth,
Their waters clear or sullied, all are lost
Within the bosom of yon crystal Lake,
And end their journey in the same repose!

"And blest are they who sleep; and we that know,
While in a spot like this we breathe and walk,
That all beneath us by the wings are covered
Of motherly humanity, outspread
And gathering all within their tender shade,
Though loth and slow to come! A battle-field,
In stillness left when slaughter is no more,
With this compared, makes[3] a strange spectacle!
A dismal prospect yields the wild shore strewn
With wrecks, and trod by feet of young and old

---

[1] 1845.
. . mysteriously-consorted Pair 1814.

[2] 1814.
. . . . . and therewith C.

[3] 1845.
. . . . is . . . 1814.
. . . . yields . . 1836.

Wandering about in miserable search
Of friends or kindred,[1] whom the angry sea
Restores not to their prayer! Ah! who would think
That all the scattered subjects which compose
Earth's melancholy vision through the space
Of all her climes—these wretched, these depraved,
To virtue lost, insensible of peace,
From the delights of charity cut off,
To pity dead, the oppressor and the opprest;
Tyrants who utter the destroying word,
And slaves who will consent to be destroyed—
Were of one species with the sheltered few,
Who, with a dutiful and tender hand,
Lodged, in a dear appropriated spot,[2]
This file of infants; some that never breathed
The vital air; others, which, though allowed[3]
That privilege, did yet expire too soon,
Or with too brief a warning, to admit
Administration of the holy rite
That lovingly consigns the babe to the arms
Of Jesus, and his everlasting care.
These that in trembling hope are laid apart;
And the besprinkled nursling, unrequired
Till he begins to smile upon the breast
That feeds him; and the tottering little-one
Taken from air and sunshine when the rose
Of infançy first blooms upon his cheek;
The thinking, thoughtless, school-boy; the bold youth
Of soul impetuous, and the bashful maid
Smitten while all the promises of life

[1] 1836.
A rueful sight the wild shore strewn with wrecks
And trod by people in afflicted quest
Of friends and kindred, ... 1814.

[2] 1836.
Did lodge, in an appropriated spot, 1814.

[3] 1836.
. . . . and others, who allowed 1814.

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Are opening round her; those of middle age,
Cast down while confident in strength they stand,
Like pillars fixed more firmly, as might seem,
And more secure, by very weight of all
That, for support, rests on them; the decayed
And burthensome; and lastly, that poor few
Whose light of reason is with age extinct;
The hopeful and the hopeless, first and last,
The earliest summoned and the longest spared—
Are here deposited, with tribute paid
Various, but unto each some tribute paid;[1]
As if, amid these peaceful hills and groves,
Society were touched with kind concern,
And gentle 'Nature grieved, that one should die;'*
Or, if the change demanded no regret,
Observed the liberating stroke—and blessed.

"And whence that tribute? wherefore these regards?†
Not from the naked *Heart* alone of Man
(Though claiming high[2] distinction upon earth
As the sole spring and fountain-head of tears,
His own peculiar utterance for distress
Or gladness)—No," the philosophic Priest
Continued, "'tis not in the vital seat
Of feeling to produce them, without aid
From the pure soul, the soul sublime and pure;
With her two faculties of eye and ear,
The one by which a creature, whom his sins

---

[1] 1814.
Are here deposited as the like shall be
Through ages yet to come. C.

[2] 1827.
. framed to high . . . . . 1814.

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* In a note to the edition of 1814, Wordsworth added to the above quotation *Southey's Retrospect*. See p. 388 of this volume.
† In 1814 Wordsworth added to this line a prefatory note to his *Essay upon Epitaphs*, and the *Essay* itself, for which see *The Prose Works*.

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Have rendered prone, can upward[1] look to heaven ;
The other that empowers him to perceive
The voice of Deity, on height and plain,
Whispering those truths in stillness, which the WORD,
To the four quarters of the winds, proclaims.
Not without such assistance could the use
Of these benign observances prevail :
Thus are they born, thus fostered, thus[2] maintained ;
And by the care prospective of our wise
Forefathers, who, to guard against the shocks
The fluctuation and decay of things,
Embodied and established these high truths
In solemn institutions :—men convinced
That life is love and immortality,
The being one, and one the element.
There lies the channel, and original bed,
From the beginning, hollowed out and scooped
For Man's affections—else betrayed and lost,
And swallowed up 'mid deserts infinite !
This is the genuine course, the aim, and end
Of prescient reason ; all conclusions else
Are abject, vain, presumptuous, and perverse.
The faith partaking of those holy times,
Life, I repeat, is energy of love
Divine or human ; exercised in pain,
In strife, in tribulation ; and ordained,
If so approved and sanctified, to pass,
Through shades and silent rest, to endless joy." *

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[1] 1814.
. . . . upward can . . . C.

[2] 1836.
. . . . . . and . . 1814.

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* On the 1st of August 1849, during the last year of the poet's life, he transcribed the five lines beginning—

Life, I repeat, is energy of love

on a presentation copy of his works, sent to Thomas Gough. It was one of the last things he ever wrote.—ED.

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Book Sixth

THE CHURCH-YARD AMONG THE MOUNTAINS

ARGUMENT

Poet's Address to the State and Church of England—The Pastor not inferior to the ancient Worthies of the Church—He begins his Narratives with an instance of unrequited Love—Anguish of mind subdued, and how—The lonely Miner—An instance of perseverance—Which leads by contrast to an example of abused talents, irresolution, and weakness—Solitary, applying this covertly to his own case, asks for an instance of some Stranger, whose dispositions may have led him to end his days here—Pastor, in answer, gives an account of the harmonising influence of Solitude upon two men of opposite principles, who had encountered agitations in public life—The rule by which Peace may be obtained expressed, and where—Solitary hints at an overpowering Fatality—Answer of the Pastor—What subjects he will exclude from his Narratives—Conversation upon this—Instance of an unamiable character, a Female, and why given—Contrasted with this, a meek sufferer, from unguarded and betrayed love—Instance of heavier guilt, and its consequences to the Offender—With this instance of a Marriage Contract broken is contrasted one of a Widower, evidencing his faithful affection towards his deceased wife by his care of their female Children.[1]

HAIL to the crown by Freedom shaped—to gird
An English Sovereign's brow! and to the throne
Whereon he sits! Whose deep foundations lie
In veneration and the people's love;
Whose steps are equity, whose seat is law.
—Hail to the State of England! And conjoin
With this a salutation as devout,
Made to the spiritual fabric of her Church;

[1] 1827.
Second Marriage of a Widower prudential and happy.
1814.

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Founded in truth; by blood of Martyrdom
Cemented; by the hands of Wisdom reared
In beauty of holiness, with ordered pomp,
Decent and unreproved. The voice, that greets
The majesty of both, shall pray for both;
That, mutually protected and sustained,*
They may endure long as the sea[1] surrounds
This favoured Land, or sunshine warms her soil.

And O, ye swelling hills, and spacious plains!
Besprent from shore to shore with steeple-towers,
And spires whose 'silent finger points to heaven;' †
Nor wanting, at wide intervals, the bulk
Of ancient minster lifted above the cloud
Of the dense air, which town or city breeds
To intercept the sun's glad beams—may ne'er
That true succession fail of English hearts,
Who, with ancestral feeling, can perceive[2]
What in those holy structures ye possess
Of ornamental interest, and the charm
Of pious sentiment diffused afar,
And human charity, and social love.
—Thus never shall the indignities of time
Approach their reverend graces, unopposed;
Nor shall the elements be free to hurt
Their fair proportions; nor the blinder rage
Of bigot zeal madly to overturn;
And, if the desolating hand of war
Spare them, they shall continue to bestow,
Upon the thronged abodes of busy men

---

[1] 1832.
. . . . as long as sea . . 1814.

[2] 1827.
. . . . . of English Hearts,
That can perceive, not less than heretofore
Our Ancestors did feelingly perceive, 1814.

---

* Note Wordsworth's love for the Established Church of England, and compare the Ecclesiastical Sonnets.—Ed.
† See Wordsworth's note, p. 389.—Ed.

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(Depraved, and ever prone to fill the mind[1]
Exclusively with transitory things)
An air and mien of dignified pursuit;
Of sweet civility, on rustic wilds.

The Poet, fostering for his native land
Such hope, entreats that servants may abound
Of those pure altars worthy; ministers
Detached from pleasure, to the love of gain
Superior, insusceptible of pride,
And by ambitious[2] longings undisturbed;
Men, whose delight is where their duty leads
Or fixes them; whose least distinguished day
Shines with some portion of that heavenly lustre
Which makes the sabbath lovely in the sight
Of blessed angels, pitying human cares.
—And, as on earth it is the doom of truth
To be perpetually attacked by foes
Open or covert, be that priesthood still,
For her defence, replenished with a band
Of strenuous champions, in scholastic arts
Thoroughly disciplined; nor (if in course
Of the revolving world's disturbances
Cause should recur, which righteous Heaven avert!
To meet such trial) from their spiritual sires
Degenerate; who, constrained to wield the sword
Of disputation, shrunk not, though assailed
With hostile din, and combating in sight
Of angry umpires, partial and unjust;
And did, thereafter, bathe their hands in fire,*
So to declare the conscience satisfied:
Nor for their bodies would accept release;

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[1] 1836.
. . . . . . their minds 1814.

[2] 1827.
. . ambition's . . . . 1814.

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* Was he thinking of Cranmer?—Ed.

But, blessing God and praising him, bequeathed
With their last breath, from out the smouldering flame,
The faith which they by diligence had earned,
Or,[1] through illuminating grace, received,
For their dear countrymen, and all mankind.
O high example, constancy divine!

Even such a Man (inheriting the zeal
And from the sanctity of elder times
Not deviating,—a priest, the like of whom,
If multiplied, and in their stations set,
Would o'er the bosom of a joyful land
Spread true religion and her genuine fruits)
Before me stood that day; on holy ground
Fraught with the relics of mortality,
Exalting tender themes, by just degrees
To lofty raised; and to the highest, last;
The head and mighty paramount of truths,—
Immortal life, in never-fading worlds,
For mortal creatures, conquered and secured.

That basis laid, those principles of faith
Announced, as a preparatory act
Of reverence done to the spirit of the place,[2]
The Pastor cast his eyes upon the ground;
Not, as before, like one oppressed with awe,
But with a mild and social cheerfulness;
Then to the Solitary turned, and spake.

"At morn or eve, in your retired domain,
Perchance you not unfrequently have marked
A Visitor—in quest of herbs and flowers;[3]

---

[1] 1827.
And . . . . 1814.

[2] 1845.
Of reverence to the spirit of the place; 1814.

[3] 1827.
A Visitor—intent upon the task
Of prying, low and high, for herbs and flowers: 1814.

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Too delicate employ, as would appear,
For one, who, though of drooping mien, had yet
From nature's kindliness received a frame
Robust as ever rural labour bred."

The Solitary answered: "Such a Form
Full well I recollect. We often crossed
Each other's path; but, as the Intruder seemed
Fondly to prize the silence which he kept,
And I as willingly did cherish mine,
We met, and passed, like shadows. I have heard,
From my good Host, that being crazed in brain
By unrequited love, he scaled the rocks,[1]
Dived into caves, and pierced the matted woods,
In hope to find some virtuous herb of power
To cure his malady!"
                                        The Vicar smiled,—
"Alas! before to-morrow's sun goes down
His habitation will be here: for him
That open grave is destined."*
                                                "Died he then
Of pain and grief?" the Solitary asked,
"Do not believe it; never could that be!"[2]

"He loved," the Vicar answered, "deeply loved,
Loved fondly, truly, fervently; and dared

---

[1] 1836.
. . . . . that he was crazed in brain
By unrequited love; and scaled the rocks, 1814.

[2] 1836.
"Believe it not—oh! never could that be!" 1814.

---

* "His story is here truly related. He was a schoolfellow of mine for some years. He came to us when he was at least seventeen years of age, very tall, robust, and full grown. This prevented him from falling into the amusements and games of the school; consequently, he gave more time to books. He was not remarkably bright or quick, but, by industry, he made a progress more than respectable. His parents not being wealthy enough to send him to college when he left Hawkshead, he became a schoolmaster, with a view to prepare himself for holy orders. About this time he fell in love, as related in the poem, and everything followed as there described, except that I do not know exactly when and where he died."—I. F.

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At length to tell his love, but sued in vain;[1]
Rejected, yea repelled; and, if with scorn
Upon the haughty maiden's brow, 'tis but
A high-prized plume which female Beauty wears
In wantonness of conquest, or puts on
To cheat the world, or from herself to hide
Humiliation, when no longer free,
That he could brook,[2] and glory in;—but when
The tidings came that she whom he had wooed
Was wedded to another, and his heart
Was forced to rend away its only hope;
Then, Pity could have scarcely found on earth
An object worthier of regard than he,
In the transition of that bitter hour!
Lost was she, lost; nor could the Sufferer say
That in the act of preference he had been
Unjustly dealt with; but the Maid was gone!
Had vanished[3] from his prospects and desires;
Not by translation to the heavenly choir
Who have put off their mortal spoils—ah no!
She lives another's wishes to complete,—
'Joy be their lot, and happiness,' he cried,
'His lot and hers, as misery must be mine!'[4]

"Such was that strong concussion; but the Man,

---

[1] 1827.

. . . . and pined
When he had told his love, and sued in vain, 1814.

[2] 1827.

. . . . Beauty wears.
That he could brook, ... 1814.

[3] 1827.

. . . . . but the Maid was gone!
She, whose dear name with unregarded sighs
He long had blessed, whose Image was preserved—
Shrined in his breast with fond idolatry,
Had vanished . . . . 1814.

[4] 1845.

. . . . . as misery is mine!' 1814.

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Who trembled, trunk and limbs, like some huge oak
By a fierce tempest shaken, soon resumed
The stedfast quiet natural to a mind
Of composition gentle and sedate,
And, in its movements, circumspect and slow.
To books, and to the long-forsaken desk,
O'er which enchained by science he had loved
To bend, he stoutly re-addressed himself,
Resolved to quell his pain, and search for truth[1]
With keener appetite (if that might be)
And closer industry. Of what ensued
Within the heart[2] no outward sign appeared
Till a betraying sickliness was seen
To tinge his cheek; and through his frame it crept
With slow mutation unconcealable;
Such universal change as autumn makes
In the fair body of a leafy grove
Discoloured, then divested.

"'Tis affirmed
By poets skilled in nature's secret ways
That Love will not submit to be controlled
By mastery;—and the good Man lacked not friends
Who strove to instil this truth into his mind,

---

[1] . . . . seek for truth MS.

[2] 1827.

. . . . circumspect and slow.
Of rustic Parents bred, He had been trained,
(So prompted their aspiring wish) to skill
In numbers and the sedentary art
Of penmanship,—with pride professed, and taught
By his endeavours in the mountain dales.
Now, those sad tidings weighing on his heart,
To books, and papers, and the studious desk,
He stoutly readdressed himself—resolved
To quell his pain, and enter on the path
Of old pursuits with keener appetite
And closer industry. Of what ensued
Within his soul, ... 1814.

Within his heart . . . . . . MS.

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A mind in all heart-mysteries unversed.
'Go to the hills,' said one, 'remit a while
'This baneful diligence:—at early morn
'Court the fresh air, explore the heaths and woods;
'And, leaving it to others to foretell,
'By calculations sage, the ebb and flow
'Of tides, and when the moon will be eclipsed,
'Do you, for your own benefit, construct
'A calendar of flowers, plucked as they blow
'Where health abides, and cheerfulness, and peace.'
The attempt was made;—'tis needless to report
How hopelessly; but innocence is strong,
And an entire simplicity of mind
A thing most sacred in the eye of Heaven;
That opens, for such sufferers, relief
Within the soul, fountains of grace divine;[1]
And doth commend their weakness and disease
To Nature's care, assisted in her office
By all the elements that round her wait
To generate, to preserve, and to restore;
And by her beautiful array of forms
Shedding sweet influence from above; or pure
Delight exhaling from the ground they tread."

"Impute it not to impatience, if," exclaimed
The Wanderer, "I infer that he was healed
By perseverance in the course prescribed."

"You do not err: the powers, that[2] had been lost
By slow degrees, were gradually regained;
The fluttering nerves composed; the beating heart
In rest established; and the jarring thoughts
To harmony restored.—But yon dark mould

[1] 1836.
Within their souls, a fount of grace divine; 1814.

[2] 1827.
. . . . which . . 1814.

Will cover him, in the fulness of his strength,[1]
Hastily smitten by a fever's force;
Yet not with stroke so sudden as refused
Time to look back with tenderness on her
Whom he had loved in passion; and to send
Some farewell words—with one, but one, request;[2]
That, from his dying hand, she would accept
Of his possessions that which most he prized;
A book, upon whose leaves some chosen plants,
By his own hand disposed with nicest care,[3]
In undecaying beauty were preserved;*
Mute register, to him, of time and place,
And various fluctuations in the breast;
To her, a monument of faithful love
Conquered, and in tranquillity retained!

"Close to his destined habitation, lies
One who achieved a humbler victory,
Though marvellous in its kind. A place there is[4]
High in these mountains, that allured a band

---

[1] 1832.
Will cover him; in height of strength—to earth 1814.

[2] 1827.
Some farewell words; and, with those words, a prayer 1814.

[3] 1827.
A Book, upon the surface of whose leaves
Some chosen plants, disposed with nicest care, 1814.

[4] 1827.
One whose Endeavours did at length achieve
A victory less worthy of regard,
Though marvellous in its kind. A Place exists 1814.

---

* Compare, in Keble's *Christian Year*, "Forms of Prayer to be used at Sea."

Far, far away, the home-sick seaman's hoard,
Thy fragrant tokens live,
Like flower-leaves in a precious volume stored,
To solace and relieve, etc. ED.

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Of keen adventurers to unite their pains
In search of precious ore: they tried, were foiled—[1]
And all desisted, all, save him alone.
He,[2] taking counsel of his own clear thoughts,
And trusting only to his own weak hands,
Urged unremittingly the stubborn work,
Unseconded, uncountenanced; then, as time
Passed on, while still his lonely efforts found
No recompense, derided; and at length,
By many pitied, as insane of mind;
By others dreaded as the luckless thrall
Of subterranean Spirits feeding hope
By various mockery of sight and sound;
Hope after hope, encouraged and destroyed.
—But when the lord of seasons had matured
The fruits of earth through space of twice ten years,
The mountain's entrails offered to his view
And trembling grasp the long-deferred reward.[3]
Not with more transport did Columbus greet
A world, his rich discovery! * But our Swain,

---

[1] 1836.
In search of treasure there by Nature formed,
And there concealed: but they who tried were foiled, 1814.
. . . . . . to unite their pains
In search of precious ore: who tried were foiled, 1827.

[2] 1827.
. . . . . . save he alone;
Who . . . . 1814.

[3] 1827.
. . . . to the view
Of the Old Man, and to his trembling grasp,
His bright, his long-deferred, his dear reward. 1814.
. . . his long deferred reward. MS.

---

* "The Miner, described as having found his treasure after twice ten years of labour, lived in Paterdale, and the story is true to the letter. It seems to me, however, rather remarkable, that the strength of mind which had supported him through his long unrewarded labour, did not enable him to bear its successful issue."—I. F.

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A very hero till his point was gained,
Proved all unable to support the weight
Of prosperous fortune. On the fields he looked
With an unsettled liberty of thought,
Wishes and endless schemes; by daylight walked[1]
Giddy and restless; ever and anon
Quaffed in his gratitude immoderate cups;
And truly might be said to die of joy!
He vanished; but conspicuous to this day
The path remains that linked his cottage-door
To the mine's mouth; a long and slanting track,
Upon the rugged mountain's stony side,
Worn by his daily visits to and from
The darksome centre of a constant hope.
This vestige, neither force of beating rain,
Nor the vicissitudes of frost and thaw
Shall cause to fade, till ages pass away;
And it is named, in memory of the event,
The PATH OF PERSEVERANCE."
"Thou from whom
Man has his strength," exclaimed the Wanderer, "oh!
Do thou direct it! To the virtuous grant
The penetrative eye which can perceive
In this blind world the guiding vein of hope;
That, like this Labourer, such may dig their way,
'Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified;' *
Grant to the wise *his* firmness of resolve!"

"That prayer were not superfluous," said the Priest,
"Amid the noblest relics, proudest dust,
That Westminster, for Britain's glory, holds
Within the bosom of her awful pile,
Ambitiously collected. Yet the sigh,

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[1] 1836.
Of schemes and wishes; in the day-light walked 1814.

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* See *Paradise Lost*, book v. l. 899.—ED.

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Which wafts that prayer to heaven, is due to all,
Wherever laid, who living fell below
Their virtue's humbler mark; a sigh of *pain*
If to the opposite extreme they sank.
How would you pity her who yonder rests;
Him, farther off; the pair, who here are laid;
But, above all, that mixture of earth's mould *
Whom sight of this green hillock to my mind
Recals!
"*He* lived not till his locks were nipped
By seasonable frost of age; nor died
Before his temples, prematurely forced
To mix the manly brown with silver grey,
Gave obvious instance of the sad effect
Produced, when thoughtless Folly hath usurped
The natural crown that[1] sage Experience wears.
Gay, volatile, ingenious, quick to learn,
And prompt to exhibit all that he possessed
Or could perform; a zealous actor, hired
Into the troop of mirth, a soldier, sworn
Into the lists of giddy enterprise—
Such was he; † yet, as if within his frame
Two several souls alternately had lodged,
Two sets of manners could the Youth put on;
And, fraught with antics as the Indian bird
That writhes and chatters in her wiry cage,
Was graceful, when it pleased him, smooth and still
As the mute swan that floats adown the stream,
Or, on the waters of the unruffled lake,
Anchors her placid beauty. Not a leaf,

[1] 1827.
. . . . which . . . 1814.

* See *Comus*, l. 244.—Ed.

† "The next character, to whom the priest is led by contrast with the resoluteness displayed by the foregoing, is taken from a person born and bred in Grasmere, by name Dawson; and whose talents, dispositions, and way of life, were such as are here delineated. I did not know him, but all was fresh in memory when we settled at Grasmere in the beginning of the century." —I. F.

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That flutters on the bough, lighter than he ;[1]
And not a flower, that droops in the green shade,
More winningly reserved ! If ye enquire
How such consummate elegance was bred
Amid these wilds, this answer may suffice ;
'Twas Nature's will ;[2] who sometimes undertakes,
For the reproof of human vanity,
Art to outstrip in her peculiar walk.
Hence, for this Favourite—lavishly endowed
With personal gifts, and bright instinctive wit,
While both, embellishing each other, stood
Yet farther recommended by the charm
Of fine demeanour, and by dance and song,
And skill in letters—every fancy shaped
Fair expectations ; nor, when to the world's
Capacious field forth went the Adventurer, there
Were he and his attainments overlooked,
Or scantily rewarded ; but all hopes,
Cherished for him, he suffered to depart,
Like blighted buds ; or clouds that mimicked land
Before the sailor's eye ; or diamond drops
That sparkling decked the morning grass ; or aught
That *was* attractive, and hath ceased to be !

"Yet, when this Prodigal returned, the rites
Of joyful greeting were on him bestowed,
Who, by humiliation undeterred,
Sought for his weariness a place of rest
Within his Father's gates.—Whence came he ?—clothed
In tattered garb, from hovels where abides

---

[1] 1840.
. . . . more light than He ; 1814.

[2] 1827.
Amid these wilds ; a composition framed
Of qualities so adverse—to diffuse,
Where'er he moved, diversified delight ;
A simple answer may suffice, even this,
'Twas Nature's will ; . . . . 1814.

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Necessity, the stationary host
Of vagrant poverty; from rifted barns
Where no one dwells but the wide-staring owl
And the owl's prey; from these bare haunts, to which [1]
He had descended from the proud saloon,
He came, the ghost of beauty and of health,
The wreck of gaiety! But soon revived
In strength, in power refitted, he renewed
His suit to Fortune; and she smiled again
Upon a fickle Ingrate. Thrice he rose,
Thrice sank [2] as willingly. For he—whose nerves
Were used to thrill with pleasure, while his voice
Softly accompanied the tuneful harp,
By the nice finger of fair ladies touched
In glittering halls—was able to derive
No [3] less enjoyment from an abject choice.
Who happier for the moment—who more blithe
Than this fallen Spirit? in those dreary holds
His talents lending to exalt the freaks
Of merry-making beggars,—now, provoked
To laughter multiplied in louder peals
By his malicious wit; then, all enchained
With mute astonishment, themselves to see
In their own arts outdone, their fame eclipsed,
As by the very presence of the Fiend
Who dictates and inspires illusive feats,
For knavish purposes! The city, too,
(With shame I speak it) to her guilty bowers
Allured him, sunk so low in self-respect
As there to linger, there to eat his bread,

---

[1] 1827.
And the Owl's Prey; none permanently house
But many harbour; from these Haunts, to which 1814.

[2] 1827.
. sunk . . . . 1814.

[3] 1832.
Not . . . . 1814.

Hired minstrel of voluptuous blandishment;
Charming the air with skill of hand or voice,
Listen who would, be wrought upon who might,
Sincerely wretched hearts, or falsely gay.
—Such the too frequent tenour of his boast [1]
In ears that relished the report;—but all
Was from his Parents happily concealed;
Who saw enough for blame and pitying love.
They also were permitted to receive
His last, repentant breath; and closed his eyes,
No more to open on that irksome world
Where he had long existed in the state
Of a young fowl beneath one mother hatched,
Though from another sprung, different in kind: [2]
Where he had lived, and could not cease to live,
Distracted in propensity; content
With neither element of good or ill;
And yet in both rejoicing; man unblest;
Of contradictions infinite the slave,
Till his deliverance, when Mercy made him
One with himself, and one with them that sleep." [3]

"'Tis strange," observed the Solitary, "strange
It seems, and scarcely less than pitiful,
That in a land where charity provides
For all that [4] can no longer feed themselves,
A man like this should choose to bring his shame
To the parental door; and with his sighs

---

[1] 1827.
—Truths I record to many known, for such
The not unfrequent tenor of his boast — 1814.

[2] 1836.
. . . . . . of different kind: — 1814.

[3] 1836.
. . . . . . with those who sleep." — 1814.
. . . . . . with them who sleep." — 1827.

[4] 1827.
. . who . . . . — 1814.

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Infect the air which he had freely breathed
In happy infancy. He could not pine,
Through lack of converse;[1] no—he must have found
Abundant exercise for thought and speech,
In his dividual being, self-reviewed,
Self-catechised, self-punished.—Some there are
Who, drawing near their final home, and much
And daily longing that the same were reached,
Would rather shun than seek the fellowship
Of kindred mould.—Such haply here are laid?"

"Yes," said the Priest, "the Genius of our hills—
Who seems, by these stupendous barriers cast
Round his domain, desirous not alone
To keep his own, but also to exclude
All other progeny—doth sometimes lure,
Even by his[2] studied depth of privacy,
The unhappy alien hoping to obtain
Concealment, or seduced by wish to find,
In place from outward molestation free,
Helps to internal ease. Of many such
Could I discourse; but as their stay was brief,
So their departure only left behind
Fancies, and loose conjectures. Other trace
Survives, for worthy mention, of a pair
Who, from the pressure of their several fates,
Meeting as strangers, in a petty town *
Whose blue roofs ornament a distant reach
Of this far-winding vale,* remained as friends
True to their choice; and gave their bones in trust

[1] 1827.
. . . . . . He could not pine,
Whencee'er rejected howsoe'er forlorn,
Through lack of converse, ... 1814.

[2] 1845.
Even by this . . . . 1814.

* Hawkshead. The series of small valleys from Dunmail Raise to Esthwaite is described as one "far-winding vale."—Ed.

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To this loved cemetery, here to lodge
With unescutcheoned privacy interred
Far from the family vault.—A Chieftain one *
By right of birth ; within whose spotless breast
The fire of ancient Caledonia burned :
He, with the foremost whose impatience hailed
The Stuart, landing to resume, by force
Of arms, the crown which bigotry had lost,
Aroused his clan ; and, fighting at their head,
With his brave sword endeavoured to prevent
Culloden's fatal overthrow. Escaped
From that disastrous rout, to foreign shores
He fled ; and when the lenient hand of time
Those troubles had appeased, he sought and gained,
For his obscured condition, an obscure
Retreat, within this nook of English ground.

"The other, born in Britain's southern tract,
Had fixed his milder loyalty, and placed
His gentler sentiments of love and hate,
There, where *they* placed them who in conscience prized
The new succession, as a line of kings
Whose oath had virtue to protect the land
Against the dire assaults of papacy
And arbitrary rule. But launch thy bark
On the distempered flood of public life,
And cause for most rare triumph will be thine
If, spite of keenest eye and steadiest hand,
The stream, that bears thee forward, prove not, soon
Or late, a perilous master. He—who oft,
Beneath[1] the battlements and stately trees

[1] 1836.
Under . . . . 1814.

* "Two individuals, who, by their several fortunes, were, at different times, driven to take refuge at the small and obscure town of Hawkshead on the skirt of these mountains. Their stories I had from the dear old dame with whom, as a schoolboy, and afterwards, I lodged for nearly the space of ten years. The elder, the Jacobite, was named Drummond, and was of a high family in Scotland."—I. F.

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That round his mansion cast a sober gloom,
Had moralised on this, and other truths
Of kindred import, pleased and satisfied—
Was forced to vent his wisdom with a sigh
Heaved from the heart in fortune's bitterness,
When he had crushed a plentiful estate
By ruinous contest, to obtain a seat
In Britain's senate. Fruitless was the attempt:
And while the uproar of that desperate strife
Continued yet to vibrate on his ear,
The vanquished Whig,* under a borrowed name,[1]
(For the mere sound and echo of his own
Haunted him with sensations of disgust
That[2] he was glad to lose) slunk from the world
To the deep shade of those[3] untravelled Wilds;
In which the Scottish Laird had long possessed
An undisturbed abode. Here, then, they met,
Two doughty champions; flaming Jacobite
And sullen Hanoverian! You might think
That losses and vexations, less severe
Than those which they had severally sustained,
Would have inclined each to abate his zeal
For his ungrateful cause; no,—I have heard
My reverend Father tell that, 'mid the calm
Of that small town encountering thus, they filled,
Daily, its bowling-green with harmless strife;
Plagued with uncharitable thoughts the church;
And vexed the market-place. But in the breasts
Of these opponents gradually was wrought,

[1] 1836.
. . . . beneath a *borrowed* name, 1814.

[2] 1827.
Which . . . . 1814.

[3] 1836.
. . . . these . . . 1814.

* "The Hanoverian Whig bore the name of Vandeput [Sir George Vandeput], and might, perhaps, be a descendant of some Dutchman who had come over in the train of King William."—I. F.

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With little change of general sentiment,
Such leaning towards [1] each other, that their days
By choice were spent in constant fellowship;
And if, at times, they fretted with the yoke,
Those very bickerings made them love it more.

"A favourite boundary to their lengthened walks
This Church-yard was. And, whether they had come
Treading their path in sympathy and linked
In social converse, or by some short space
Discreetly parted to preserve the peace,
One spirit seldom failed to extend its sway
Over both minds, when they awhile had marked
The visible quiet of this holy ground,
And breathed its soothing air;—the spirit of hope
And saintly magnanimity; that—spurning
The field of selfish difference and dispute,
And every care which transitory things,
Earth and the kingdoms of the earth, create—
Doth, by a rapture of forgetfulness,
Preclude forgiveness, from the praise debarred,
Which else the Christian virtue might have claimed.

"There live who yet remember here to have seen
Their courtly figures, seated on the stump
Of an old yew, their favourite resting-place.
But as the remnant of the long-lived tree
Was disappearing by a swift decay,
They, with joint care, determined to erect,
Upon its site, a dial,* that might stand

---

[1] 1845.
Such change towards . . . . . . 1814.

---

* Of this "dial," as of the "decorated pillar," there is no trace in Grasmere churchyard, and no tradition exists of either. There is, however, a pillar in Bowness churchyard in which a dial used to stand, and Wordsworth may have blended his descriptions of Grasmere with his remembrances of Bowness.—Ed.

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For public use preserved, and thus survive[1]
As their own private monument: for this
Was the particular spot, in which they wished
(And Heaven was pleased to accomplish the desire)
That, undivided, their remains should lie.
So, where the mouldered tree had stood, was raised
Yon structure, framing, with the ascent of steps
That to the decorated pillar * lead,
A work of art more sumptuous than might seem
To suit this place;[2] yet built in no proud scorn
Of rustic homeliness; they only aimed
To ensure for it respectful guardianship.
Around the margin of the plate, whereon
The shadow falls to note the stealthy hours,
Winds an inscriptive legend."—At these words
Thither we turned; and gathered, as we read,
The appropriate sense, in Latin numbers couched:
'*Time flies; it is his melancholy task*
To bring, and bear away, delusive hopes,
And re-produce the troubles he destroys.
But, while his blindness thus is occupied,
Discerning Mortal! do thou serve the will
Of Time's eternal Master, and that peace,
Which the world wants, shall be for thee confirmed!'[3]

"Smooth verse, inspired by no unlettered Muse,"
Exclaimed the Sceptic, "and the strain of thought
Accords with nature's language;—the soft voice

[1] 1827.
. . . . . which should stand
For public use; and also might survive 1814.

[2] 1827.
. . . . . . as might seem,
Than suits this Place; . . . . . 1814.

[3] Italics were first used in 1827.

* See the note on the previous page.

Of yon white torrent falling down the rocks *
Speaks, less distinctly, to the same effect.
If, then, their blended influence be not lost
Upon our hearts, not wholly lost, I grant,
Even upon mine, the more are we required
To feel for those among our fellow-men,
Who, offering no obeisance to the world,
Are yet made desperate by 'too quick a sense
Of constant infelicity,' † cut off
From peace like exiles on some barren rock,
Their life's appointed prison; not more free
Than sentinels, between two armies, set,
With nothing better, in the chill night air,
Than their own thoughts to comfort them. Say why
That ancient story of Prometheus ‡ chained
To the bare rock, on frozen Caucasus;
The vulture,[1] the inexhaustible repast
Drawn from his vitals? Say what meant the woes
By Tantalus § entailed upon his race,
And the dark sorrows of the line of Thebes? ||

---

[1] 1845.
. . . . . of Prometheus chained?
The Vulture— . . . . 1814.

---

* This may be an allusion to Wray Ghyll Force, which descends between Silver How and Easdale. No other white torrent falling down rocks is visible from the Grasmere churchyard. This one is distinctly seen, when looking towards Silver How to the west.—Ed.

† Compare "How many people there are that weep with want, and are mad with oppression, or are desperate by too quick a sense of a constant infelicity."—Jeremy Taylor's *Rule and Exercises of Holy Dying*, i. 5, 2.—Ed.

‡ Prometheus, son of the Titan Iapetus, outwitted Jupiter, stealing fire from heaven, etc. Jupiter, in revenge, caused Vulcan to chain him to a rock in the Caucasus, where an eagle or vulture preyed on his liver daily. See Æsch. ***Prometheus***. Compare, "Prometheus tied to Caucasus," ***Titus Andronicus***, act II. scene i.—Ed.

§ Tantalus, son of Jupiter, punished for disclosing his father's secrets, by being placed after death up to the chin in the waters of a lake, which withdrew whenever he attempted to drink, while boughs laden with fruit hung above his head, and were tossed from him by the wind whenever he tried to grasp them.—Ed.

|| "The dark sorrows of the line of Thebes" descended for three genera-

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Fictions in form, but in their substance truths,
Tremendous truths! familiar to the men
Of long-past times, nor obsolete in ours.
Exchange the shepherd's frock of native grey
For robes with regal purple tinged; convert
The crook into a sceptre; give the pomp
Of circumstance; and here the tragic Muse
Shall find apt subjects for her highest art.
Amid the groves, under the shadowy hills,[1]
The generations are prepared; the pangs,
The internal pangs, are ready; the dread strife
Of poor humanity's afflicted will
Struggling in vain with ruthless destiny."

"Though," said the Priest in answer, "these be terms
Which a divine philosophy rejects,
We, whose established and unfailing trust
Is in controlling Providence, admit
That, through all stations, human life abounds
With mysteries;—for, if Faith were left untried,
How could the might, that lurks within her, then
Be shown? her glorious excellence—that ranks
Among the first of Powers and Virtues—proved?
Our system is not fashioned to preclude
That sympathy which you for others ask;
And I could tell, not travelling for my theme
Beyond these humble graves, of grievous crimes
And strange disasters;[2] but I pass them by,

---

[1] 1836.
. . . . beneath . . . . 1814.

[2] 1827.
Beyond the limits of these humble graves,
Of strange disasters; . . . . . . 1814.

---

tions; from Lais and Iocaste to Œdipus; thence to Eteocles, Polynices, Antigone, and Ismene.

Compare Milton's lines in *Il Penseroso*, ll. 97-100—

Sometime let gorgeous Tragedy
In sceptred pall come sweeping by,
Presenting Thebes, or Pelops' line,
Or the tale of Troy divine.

ED.

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Loth to disturb what Heaven hath hushed in peace.
—Still less, far less, am I inclined to treat
Of Man degraded in his Maker's sight
By the deformities of brutish vice:
For, in such portraits, though a vulgar face [1]
And a coarse outside of repulsive life
And unaffecting manners might at once [2]
Be recognised by all—" "Ah! do not think,"
The Wanderer somewhat eagerly exclaimed,
"Wish could be ours that you, for such poor gain,
(Gain shall I call it?—gain of what?—for whom?)
Should breathe a word tending to violate
Your own pure spirit. Not a step we look for
In slight of that forbearance and reserve
Which common human-heartedness inspires,
And mortal ignorance and frailty claim,
Upon this sacred ground, if nowhere else."

"True," said the Solitary, "be it far
From us to infringe the laws of charity.
Let judgment here in mercy be pronounced;
This, self-respecting Nature prompts, and this
Wisdom enjoins; but if the thing we seek
Be genuine knowledge, bear we then in mind
How, from his lofty throne, the sun can fling
Colours as bright on exhalations bred
By weedy pool or pestilential swamp,
As by the rivulet sparkling where it runs,
Or the pellucid lake."
"Small risk," said I,
"Of such illusion do we here incur;
Temptation here is none to exceed the truth;

---

[1] 1827.
For, though from these materials might be framed
Harsh portraiture, in which a vulgar face 1814.

[2] 1820.
. . . . . . may at once 1814.

No evidence appears that they who rest
Within this ground, were covetous of praise,
Or of remembrance even, deserved or not.
Green is the Church-yard, beautiful and green,
Ridge rising gently by the side of ridge,
A heaving surface, almost wholly free
From interruption of sepulchral stones,
And mantled o'er with aboriginal turf
And everlasting flowers.* These Dalesmen trust
The lingering gleam of their departed lives
To oral record,[1] and the silent heart;
Depositories[2] faithful and more kind
Than fondest epitaph: for, if those fail,[3]
What boots the sculptured tomb? And who can blame,
Who rather would not envy, men that feel
This mutual confidence; if, from such source,
The practice flow,—if thence, or from a deep
And general humility in death?
Nor should I much condemn it, if it spring
From disregard of time's destructive power,
As only capable to prey on things
Of earth, and human nature's mortal part.

"Yet—in less simple districts, where we see

---

[1] 1836.
. . records . . . . . . 1814.

[2] 1836.
Depository . . . . . . 1814.

[3] 1836.
Than fondest Epitaphs: for, if it fail, 1814.
Than fondest epitaphs: for, if that fail, 1827.

---

* Grasmere churchyard was, in Wordsworth's time,

almost wholly free
From interruption of sepulchral stones.

Compare the Fenwick note to the *Epistle to Sir George Beaumont* (vol. iv. p. 258). Dr. Cradock wrote in 1878—"I cannot count more than two or three gravestones of earlier date than 1800. Most of the others are of a much more recent date."—Ed.

Stone lift its forehead emulous of stone *
In courting notice; and the ground all paved
With commendations of departed worth;
Reading, where'er we turn, of innocent lives,
Of each domestic charity fulfilled,
And sufferings meekly borne—I, for my part,
Though with the silence pleased that [1] here prevails,
Among those fair recitals also range,
Soothed by the natural spirit which they breathe.
And, in the centre of a world whose soil
Is rank with all unkindness, compassed round
With such memorials, I have sometimes felt,
It was [2] no momentary happiness
To have *one* Enclosure where the voice that speaks
In envy or detraction is not heard;
Which malice may not enter; where the traces
Of evil inclinations are unknown;
Where love and pity tenderly unite
With resignation; and no jarring tone
Intrudes, the peaceful concert to disturb
Of amity and gratitude."
"Thus sanctioned,"
The Pastor said, "I willingly confine
My narratives to subjects that excite
Feelings with these accordant; love, esteem,
And admiration; lifting up a veil,
A sunbeam introducing among hearts
Retired and covert; so that ye shall have
Clear images before your gladdened eyes
Of nature's unambitious underwood,

---

[1] 1827.
. . . . . . which . . 1814.

[2] 1832.
That 'twas . . . . . . 1814.

---

* Was he thinking of such a spectacle as the churchyard at Crosthwaite, Keswick, now presents?—Ed.

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And flowers that prosper in the shade. And when
I speak of such among my flock as swerved
Or fell, those only shall be singled out[1]
Upon whose lapse, or error, something more
Than brotherly forgiveness may attend;
To such will we restrict our notice, else
Better my tongue were mute.
"And yet there are,
I feel, good reasons why we should not leave
Wholly untraced a more forbidding way.
For, strength to persevere and to support,
And energy to conquer and repel—
These elements of virtue, that declare
The native grandeur of the human soul—
Are oft-times not unprofitably shown
In the perverseness of a selfish course:
Truth every day exemplified, no less
In the grey cottage by the murmuring stream
Than in[2] fantastic conqueror's roving camp,
Or 'mid[3] the factious senate unappalled
Whoe'er may sink, or rise—to sink again,[4]
As[5] merciless proscription ebbs and flows.

"There," said the Vicar, pointing as he spake,
"A woman rests in peace; surpassed by few
In power of mind, and eloquent discourse.
Tall was her stature; her complexion dark

---

[1] 1836.
. . . . . . will I single out 1814.

[2] 1827.
Than the . . . . 1814.

[3] 1827.
Or in . . . . 1814.

[4] This line was first inserted in 1845.

[5] 1845.
While . . . . 1814.

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And saturnine; * her head not raised to hold [1]
Converse with heaven, nor yet deprest towards earth,
But in projection carried, as she walked
For ever musing. Sunken were her eyes;
Wrinkled and furrowed with habitual thought
Was her broad forehead; like the brow of one
Whose visual nerve shrinks from a painful glare
Of overpowering light.—While yet a child,
She, 'mid the humble flowerets of the vale,
Towered like the imperial thistle, not unfurnished
With its appropriate grace, yet rather seeking [2]
To be admired, than coveted and loved.
Even at that age she ruled, a sovereign queen,
Over her comrades; [3] else their simple sports,
Wanting all relish for her strenuous mind,
Had crossed her only to be shunned with scorn.[4]

---

[1] 1827.
And saturnine; her port erect, her head
Not absolutely raised, as if to hold 1814.

[2] 1827.
. . . . . yet rather framed 1814.

[3] 1832.
. . . . . . as sovereign Queen
Among her Play-mates; . . . . . 1814.

. . . . . . as sovereign queen
'Mid her companions; . . . . . 1827.

[4] 1827.
. . . . . else their simple sports
Had wanted power to occupy a mind
Held in subjection by a strong controul
Of studious application, self-imposed.
Books were her creditors; to them she paid,
With pleasing, anxious eagerness, the hours
Which they exacted; were it time allowed,
Or seized upon by stealth, or fairly won,
By stretch of industry, from other tasks. 1814.

---

* "This person lived at Town-end, and was almost our next neighbour. . . . She was a most striking instance how far a woman may surpass in talent, in knowledge, and culture of mind, those with and among whom she lives, and yet fall below them in Christian virtues of the heart and spirit." —I. F.

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—Oh! pang of sorrowful regret for those [1]
Whom, in their youth, sweet study has enthralled,
That they have lived for harsher servitude,
Whether in soul, in body, or estate!
Such doom was hers; yet nothing could subdue
Her keen desire of knowledge, nor efface [2]
Those brighter images by books imprest
Upon her memory, faithfully as stars
That occupy their places, and, though oft
Hidden by clouds, and oft bedimmed by haze,
Are not to be extinguished, nor impaired.[3]

"Two passions, both degenerate, for they both
Began in honour, gradually obtained
Rule over her, and vexed her daily life;
An unremitting,[4] avaricious thrift;
And a strange thraldom of maternal love,
That held her spirit, in its own despite,
Bound—by vexation, and regret, and scorn,
Constrained forgiveness, and relenting vows,
And tears, in pride suppressed, in shame concealed—
To a poor dissolute Son, her only child.
—Her wedded days had opened with mishap,
Whence dire dependence. What could she perform
To shake the burthen off? Ah! there was felt,
Indignantly, the weakness of her sex.
She mused, resolved, adhered to her resolve;
The hand grew slack in alms-giving, the heart [5]

---

[1] 1827.
. . . . them 1814.

[2] 1827.
. . . . . . or efface 1814.

[3] 1832.
. . . . . . or impaired. 1814.

[4] 1836.
. unrelenting . . . . . 1814.

[5] . . . . . . the hand
Grew slack in alms-giving, the heart itself MS.

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Closed by degrees to charity; heaven's blessing
Not seeking from that source, she placed her trust[1]
In ceaseless pains—and strictest parsimony
Which sternly hoarded all that could be spared,
From each day's need, out of each day's least gain.[2]

"Thus[3] all was re-established, and a pile
Constructed, that sufficed for every end,
Save the contentment of the builder's mind;
A mind by nature indisposed to aught
So placid, so inactive, as content;
A mind intolerant of lasting peace,
And cherishing the pang her heart deplored.[4]
Dread life of conflict! which I oft compared
To the agitation of a brook that runs
Down a rocky mountain, buried now and lost
In silent pools, now in strong eddies chained;[5]
But never to be charmed to gentleness:

---

1 1827.
. . . . . . Ah! there she felt,
Indignantly, the weakness of her sex,
The injustice of her low estate.—She mused;
Resolved, adhered to her resolve; her heart
Closed by degrees to charity; and, thence
Expecting not Heaven's blessing, placed her trust 1814.

2 1836.
In ceaseless pains and parsimonious care,
Which got, and sternly hoarded each day's gain. 1814.

3 Yet . . . . MS.

4 1836.
. . . . . pang which it deplored. 1814.

5 1836.
Down rocky mountains—buried now and lost
In silent pools, unfathomably deep;— 1814.
. . . and now in eddies chained,— 1827.
. . . now in strong eddies chained,— 1832.

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Its best attainment fits of such repose
As timid eyes might shrink from fathoming.[1] *

"A sudden illness seized her in the strength
Of life's autumnal season.—Shall I tell
How on her bed of death the Matron lay,
To Providence submissive, so she thought;
But fretted, vexed, and wrought upon, almost
To anger, by the malady that griped
Her prostrate frame with unrelaxing power,
As the fierce eagle fastens on the lamb?
She prayed, she moaned;—her husband's sister watched
Her dreary pillow, waited on her needs;
And yet the very sound of that kind foot
Was anguish to her ears! 'And must she rule,'
This was the death-doomed[2] Woman heard to say
In bitterness, 'and must she rule and reign,
'Sole Mistress of this house, when I am gone?
'Tend what I tended,[3] calling it her own!'
Enough;—I fear, too much.—One vernal evening,[4]
While she was yet in prime of health and strength,
I well remember, while I passed her door

---

[1] 1827.
Now in a moment starting forth again
With violence, and proud of its escape;—
Until it sink once more, by slow degrees,
Or instantly, into as dark repose. 1814.

[2] 1845.
This was the dying . . . . . . 1814.

[3] 1845.
. . . . . when I am gone?
"Sit by my fire—possess what I possessed—
"Tend what I tended— . . . . 1814.

[4] 1827.
. . . too much.—Of nobler feeling
Take this example.—One autumnal evening, 1814.

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* As is notably the case with the beck in Tongue Ghyll.—Ed.

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Alone,[1] with loitering step, and upward eye
Turned towards the planet Jupiter that hung
Above the centre of the Vale, a voice
Roused me, her voice; it said, 'That glorious star
'In its untroubled element will shine
'As now it shines, when we are laid in earth
'And safe from all our sorrows.' With a sigh
She spake, yet, I believe, not unsustained
By faith in glory that shall far transcend
Aught by these perishable heavens disclosed
To sight or mind. Nor less than care divine
Is divine mercy. She, who had rebelled,
Was into meekness softened and subdued;
Did, after trials not in vain prolonged,
With resignation sink into the grave;
And her uncharitable acts,[2] I trust,
And harsh unkindnesses are all forgiven,
Tho', in this Vale, remembered with deep awe."

THE Vicar paused; and toward a seat advanced,
A long stone-seat, fixed in the Church-yard wall; *
Part shaded by cool sycamore, and part
Offering a sunny resting-place to them[3]
Who seek the House of worship, while the bells

---

[1] 1845.
Musing . . . . 1814.

[2] 1845.
"And safe from all our sorrows."—She is safe,
And her uncharitable acts, ... 1814.

[3] 1827.
The Vicar paused; and tow'rds a seat advanced,
A long stone-seat, framed in the Church-yard wall;
Part under shady sycamore, and part
Offering a place of rest in pleasant sunshine,
Even as may suit the comers old or young 1814.

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* This "long stone seat" (now a thing of the past) was fixed to the wall on the left of the south entrance-gate into the churchyard; and not—as might have been supposed—on the opposite wall, which reaches from the entrance-gate to the poet's grave. The old wall was rebuilt by the late rector, but the seat was not replaced.—ED.

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Yet ring with all their voices, or before
The last hath ceased its solitary knoll.
Beneath the shade we all sate down;[1] and there
His office, uninvited, he resumed.

"As on a sunny bank, a tender lamb
Lurks in safe shelter from the winds of March,
Screened by its parent, so that little mound
Lies guarded by its neighbour; the small heap
Speaks for itself; an Infant there doth rest;
The sheltering hillock is the Mother's grave.*
If mild discourse, and manners that conferred
A natural dignity on humblest rank;
If gladsome spirits, and benignant looks,
That for a face not beautiful did more
Than beauty for the fairest face can do;
And if religious tenderness of heart,
Grieving for sin, and penitential tears
Shed when the clouds had gathered and distained
The spotless ether of a maiden life;
If these may make a hallowed spot of earth
More holy in the sight of God or Man;
Then, o'er that mould,[2] a sanctity shall brood
Till the stars sicken at the day of doom.

"Ah! what a warning for a thoughtless man,
Could field or grove, could[3] any spot of earth,

---

[1] 1836.
To this commodious resting-place he led;
Where, by his side, we all sate down; . 1814.
Under the shade we all sate down; . . 1827.

[2] 1827.
Then, on that mold, ... 1814.

[3] 1832.
. . . . or . . . . 1814.

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* "The story was told to Mrs. Wordsworth and my sister, by the sister of this unhappy young woman. Every particular was exactly as I have related. . . . She lived at Hawkshead."—I. F. See the whole of the Fenwick note, also Charles Lamb's remarks, in his letter of Aug. 14, 1814.—Ed.

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Show to his eye an image of the pangs
Which it hath witnessed ;* render back an echo
Of the sad steps by which it hath been trod !
There, by her innocent Baby's precious grave,
And on the very turf[1] that roofs her own,
The Mother oft was seen to stand, or kneel
In the broad day, a weeping Magdalene.[2]
Now she is not ; the swelling turf reports
Of the fresh shower, but of poor Ellen's tears
Is silent ; nor is any vestige left
Of the path worn by mournful tread of her
Who, at her heart's light bidding, once had moved
In virgin fearlessness, with step that seemed[3]
Caught from the pressure of elastic turf
Upon the mountains gemmed[4] with morning dew,
In the prime hour of sweetest scents and airs.
—Serious and thoughtful was her mind ; and yet,
By reconcilement exquisite and rare,
The form, port, motions, of this Cottage-girl
Were such as might have quickened and inspired
A Titian's hand, addrest to picture forth

---

[1] 1845.
Yea, doubtless, on the turf . . . . 1814.

[2] 1814.
At prayer, a weeping Magdalene. C.

[3] 1827.
Upon the pathway, of her mournful tread ;
Nor of that pace with which she once had moved
In virgin fearlessness, a step that seemed 1814.

[4] 1827.
. . . . wet . . . . . 1814.

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* Compare the Hon. Justice Coleridge's "Reminiscences" of a walk and conversation with Wordsworth (October 1836) in Easdale, where—at the pool, which many have identified as "Emma's Dell"—he said, "I have often thought what a solemn thing it would be could we have brought to our mind at once all the scenes of distress and misery which any spot, however beautiful and calm before us, has been witness to since the beginning." (See vol. ii. p. 156.)—Ed.

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Oread or Dryad glancing through the shade
What time the hunter's earliest horn is heard
Startling the golden hills.
"A wide-spread elm
Stands in our valley, named THE JOYFUL TREE;[1]
From dateless usage which our peasants hold
Of giving welcome to the first of May
By dances round its trunk.—And if the sky
Permit, like honours, dance and song, are paid
To the Twelfth Night, beneath the frosty stars
Or the clear moon. The queen of these gay sports,
If not in beauty yet in sprightly air,
Was hapless Ellen.—No one touched the ground
So deftly, and the nicest maiden's locks
Less gracefully were braided;—but this praise,
Methinks, would better suit another place.

"She loved, and fondly deemed herself beloved.
—The road is dim, the current unperceived,
The weakness painful and most pitiful,
By which a virtuous woman, in pure youth,
May be delivered to distress and shame.
Such fate was hers.—The last time Ellen danced,
Among her equals, round THE JOYFUL TREE,
She bore a secret burthen; and full soon
Was left to tremble for a breaking vow,—
Then, to bewail a sternly-broken vow,
Alone, within her widowed Mother's house.
It was the season of unfolding leaves,
Of days advancing toward their utmost length,
And small birds singing happily to mates
Happy as they. With spirit-saddening power

[1] 1827.
When first the Hunter's startling horn is heard
Upon the golden hills. A spreading Elm
Stands in our Valley, called THE JOYFUL TREE:
An Elm distinguished by that festive name, 1814.

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Winds pipe through fading woods; but those blithe
 notes[1]
Strike the deserted to the heart; I speak
Of what I know, and what we feel within.
—Beside the cottage in which Ellen dwelt
Stands a tall ash-tree; to whose topmost twig
A thrush resorts, and annually chants,
At morn and evening from that naked perch,
While all the undergrove is thick with leaves,
A time-beguiling ditty, for delight
Of his fond partner, silent in the nest.
—'Ah why,' said Ellen, sighing to herself,
'Why do not words, and kiss, and solemn pledge;
'And nature that is kind in woman's breast,
'And reason that in man is wise and good,
'And fear of him who is a righteous judge;
'Why do not these prevail for human life,
'To keep two hearts together, that began
'Their spring-time with one love, and that have need
'Of mutual pity and forgiveness, sweet
'To grant, or be received; while that poor bird—
'O come and hear him! Thou who hast to me
'Been faithless, hear him, though a lowly creature,
'One of God's simple children that yet know not
'The universal Parent, how he sings
'As if he wished the firmament of heaven
'Should listen, and give back to him the voice
'Of his triumphant constancy and love;
'The proclamation that he makes, how far
'His darkness doth transcend our fickle light!'

---

[1] 1836.
It was the season sweet, of budding leaves,
Of days advancing tow'rds their utmost length,
And small birds singing to their happy mates.
Wild is the music of the autumnal wind
Among the faded woods; but these blithe notes 1814.
Of days advancing toward . . . 1832.

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"Such was the tender passage, not by me
Repeated without loss of simple phrase,
Which I perused, even as the words had been
Committed by forsaken Ellen's hand
To the blank margin of a Valentine,
Bedropped with tears. 'Twill please you to be told
That, studiously withdrawing from the eye
Of all companionship, the Sufferer yet
In lonely reading found a meek resource:
How thankful for the warmth of summer days,
When she could slip into the cottage-barn,
And find a secret oratory there;
Or, in the garden, under friendly veil
Of their long twilight, pore upon her book[1]
By the last lingering help of the open sky
Until dark night[2] dismissed her to her bed!
Thus did a waking fancy sometimes lose
The unconquerable pang of despised love.*

"A kindlier passion opened[3] on her soul
When that poor Child was born. Upon its face
She gazed[4] as on a pure and spotless gift
Of unexpected promise, where a grief

---

[1] 1827.
. . . . . of summer days,
And their long twilight!—friendly to that stealth
With which she slipped into the Cottage-barn,
And found a secret oratory there;
Or, in the garden, pored upon her book 1814.

[2] 1845.
. . . . of open sky,
Till the dark night . . . . . . 1814.

[3] 1814.
. . . . kindled . . . C.

[4] 1845.
She looked . . . . . . 1814.

---

* Compare *Hamlet*, act III. scene i. l. 72—
The pangs of despised love, the law's delay. ED.

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Or dread was all that had been thought of,—joy
Far livelier than bewildered traveller feels,
Amid a perilous waste that all night long
Hath harassed him toiling through fearful storm,[1]
When he beholds the first pale speck serene
Of day-spring, in the gloomy east, revealed,
And greets it with thanksgiving. 'Till this hour,'
Thus, in her Mother's hearing Ellen spake,
'There was a stony region in my heart;
'But He, at whose command the parchèd rock
'Was smitten, and poured forth a quenching stream,
'Hath softened that obduracy, and made
'Unlooked-for gladness in the desert place,
'To save the perishing; and, henceforth, I breathe
'The air with cheerful spirit, for thy sake[2]
'My Infant! and for that good Mother dear,
'Who bore me; and hath prayed for me in vain;—
'Yet not in vain; it shall not be in vain.'
She spake, nor was the assurance unfulfilled;
And if heart-rending thoughts would oft return,
They stayed not long.—The blameless Infant grew;
The Child whom Ellen and her Mother loved
They soon were proud of; tended it and nursed;
A soothing comforter, although forlorn;
Like a poor singing-bird from distant lands;
Or a choice shrub, which he, who passes by
With vacant mind, not seldom may observe
Fair-flowering in a thinly-peopled house,
Whose window, somewhat sadly, it adorns.

"Through four months' space the Infant drew its food

---

[1] 1827.
Far sweeter than bewildered Traveller feels
Upon a perilous waste, where all night long
Through darkness he hath toiled and fearful storm, 1814.

[2] 1845.
. . . . . and, henceforth, I look
Upon the light with cheerfulness, for thee 1814.

From the maternal breast; then scruples rose;
Thoughts, which the rich are free from, came and crossed
The fond affection.[1] She no more could bear
By her offence to lay a twofold weight
On a kind parent willing to forget
Their slender means: so, to that parent's care
Trusting her child, she left their common home,
And undertook with dutiful content[2]
A Foster-mother's office.
"'Tis, perchance,
Unknown to you that in these simple vales
The natural feeling of equality
Is by domestic service unimpaired;*
Yet, though such service be, with us, removed
From sense of degradation, not the less
The ungentle mind can easily find means
To impose severe restraints and laws unjust,
Which hapless Ellen now was doomed to feel:
For (blinded by an over-anxious dread
Of such excitement and divided thought[3]
As with her office would but ill accord)[4]
The pair, whose infant she was bound to nurse,
Forbad her all communion with her own:
Week after week, the mandate they enforced.[5]

---

[1] 1836.
The sweet affection. . . . . . 1814.

[2] 1845.
And with contented spirit undertook 1814.

[3] 1814.
. . . . thoughts MS.

[4] 1827.
. . . . . . doomed to feel.
In selfish blindness, for I will not say
In naked and deliberate cruelty, 1814.

[5] 1827.
. . . . with her own.
They argued that such meeting would disturb

---

* This custom still survives in the country; sons working as servants on ground belonging to their parents, and receiving payment for it.—Ed.

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—So near! yet not allowed, upon that sight
To fix her eyes—alas! 'twas hard to bear!
But worse affliction must be borne—far worse;
For 'tis Heaven's will—that, after a disease
Begun and ended within three days' space,
Her child should die; as Ellen now exclaimed,
Her own—deserted child!—Once, only once,
She saw it in that mortal malady;
And, on the burial-day, could scarcely gain
Permission to attend its obsequies.
She reached the house, last of the funeral train;
And some one, as she entered, having chanced
To urge unthinkingly their prompt departure,
'Nay,' said she, with commanding look, a spirit
Of anger never seen in her before,
'Nay, ye must wait my time!' and down she sate,
And by the unclosed coffin kept her seat
Weeping and looking, looking on and weeping,
Upon the last sweet slumber of her Child,
Until at length her soul was satisfied.

"You see the Infant's Grave; and to this spot,
The Mother, oft as she was sent abroad,
On whatsoever errand, urged her steps:
Hither she came; here stood, and sometimes knelt [1]
In the broad day, a rueful Magdalene!
So call her; for not only she bewailed
A mother's loss, but mourned in bitterness
Her own transgression; penitent sincere
As ever raised to heaven a streaming eye!
—At length the parents of the foster-child,

The Mother's mind, distract her thoughts, and thus
Unfit her for her duty—in which dread,
Week after week, the mandate was enforced. 1814.

[1] 1836.
And whatsoe'er the errand, urged her steps:
Hither she came; and here she stood, or knelt 1814.

. . . here stood, and sometimes knelt 1832.

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Noting that in despite of their commands
She still renewed and could not but renew
Those visitations, ceased to send her forth;
Or, to the garden's narrow bounds, confined.
I failed not to remind them that they erred;
For holy Nature might not thus be crossed,
Thus wronged in woman's breast: in vain I pleaded—
But the green stalk of Ellen's life was snapped,
And the flower drooped; as every eye could see,
It hung its head in mortal languishment.
—Aided by this appearance, I at length
Prevailed; and, from those bonds released, she went
Home to her mother's house.
"The Youth was fled;
The rash betrayer could not face the shame
Or sorrow which his senseless guilt had caused;
And little would his presence, or proof given
Of a relenting soul, have now availed;
For, like a shadow, he was passed away
From Ellen's thoughts; had perished to her mind
For all concerns of fear, or hope, or love,
Save only those which to their common shame,
And to his moral being appertained:
Hope from that quarter would, I know, have brought
A heavenly comfort; there she recognised
An unrelaxing bond, a mutual need;
There, and, as seemed, there only.
"She had built,[1]
Her fond maternal heart had built, a nest
In blindness all too near the river's edge;
That work a summer flood with hasty swell
Had swept away; and now her Spirit longed
For its last flight to heaven's security.
—The bodily frame wasted from day to day;[2]

[1] 1827.
. . . . raised, 1814.

[2] 1845.
—The bodily frame was wasted day by day; 1814.

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Meanwhile, relinquishing all other cares,
Her mind she strictly tutored to find peace
And pleasure in endurance. Much she thought,
And much she read ; and brooded feelingly
Upon her own unworthiness. To me,
As to a spiritual comforter and friend,
Her heart she opened ; and no pains were spared
To mitigate, as gently as I could,
The sting of self-reproach, with healing words.
Meek Saint ! through patience glorified on earth !
In whom, as by her lonely hearth she sate,
The ghastly face of cold decay put on
A sun-like beauty, and appeared divine !
May I not mention—that, within those [1] walls,
In due observance of her pious wish,
The congregation joined with me in prayer
For her soul's good ? Nor was that office vain.
—Much did she suffer : but, if any friend,
Beholding her condition, at the sight
Gave way to words of pity or complaint,
She stilled them with a prompt reproof, and said,
'He who afflicts me knows what I can bear ;
'And, when I fail, and can endure no more,
'Will mercifully take me to himself.'
So, through the cloud of death, her Spirit passed
Into that pure and unknown world of love
Where injury cannot come :—and here is laid
The mortal Body by her Infant's side."

The Vicar ceased ; and downcast looks made known
That each had listened with his inmost heart.
For me, the emotion scarcely was less strong
Or less benign than that which I had felt
When seated near my venerable Friend,

[1] 1827.
. . . . . . these . . 1814.

Under[1] those shady elms, from him I heard
The story that retraced the slow decline
Of Margaret, sinking on the lonely heath
With the neglected house to which she clung.[2]
—I noted that the Solitary's cheek
Confessed the power of nature.—Pleased though sad,
More pleased than sad, the grey-haired Wanderer sate;
Thanks to his pure imaginative soul
Capacious and serene; his blameless life,
His knowledge, wisdom, love of truth, and love
Of human kind! He was it who first broke
The pensive silence, saying:—
"Blest are they
Whose sorrow rather is to suffer wrong
Than to do wrong, albeit[3] themselves have erred.
This tale gives proof that Heaven most gently deals
With such, in their affliction.—Ellen's fate,
Her tender spirit, and her contrite heart,
Call to my mind dark hints which I have heard
Of one who died within this vale, by doom
Heavier, as his offence was heavier far.
Where, Sir, I pray you, where are laid the bones
Of Wilfred Armathwaite?"
The Vicar answered,
"In that green nook, close by the Church-yard wall,
Beneath yon hawthorn, planted by myself
In memory and for warning, and in sign
Of sweetness where dire anguish had been known,
Of reconcilement after deep offence—
There doth he rest. No theme his fate supplies
For the smooth glozings of the indulgent world;

---

1 1845.
Beneath . . . . 1814.

2 1827.
. . . . . . in which she dwelt. 1814.

3 1836.
. . . . although . . . . . 1814.

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Nor need the windings of his devious course
Be here retraced;—enough that, by mishap
And venial error, robbed of competence,
And her[1] obsequious shadow, peace of mind,
He craved a substitute in troubled joy;
Against his conscience rose in arms, and, braving
Divine displeasure, broke the marriage-vow.[2]
That which he had been weak enough to do
Was misery in remembrance; he was stung,
Stung by his inward thoughts, and by the smiles
Of wife and children stung to agony.
Wretched at home, he gained no peace abroad;

---

[1] And its . . . . MS.

[2] 1827.

There doth he lie.—In this his native Vale
He owned and tilled a little plot of land;
Here, with his Consort and his Children, saw
Days—that were seldom crossed by petty strife,
Years—safe from large misfortune; and maintained
That course which minds, of insight not too keen,
Might look on with entire complacency.
Yet, in himself and near him, there were faults
At work to undermine his happy state
By sure, though tardy progress. Active, prompt,
And lively was the Housewife; in the Vale
None more industrious; but her industry
Ill-judged, full oft, and specious, tended more
To splendid neatness; to a shewy, trim,
And overlaboured purity of house;
Than to substantial thrift. He, on his part,
Generous and easy-minded, was not free
From carelessness; and thus, in lapse of time,
These joint infirmities induced decay
Of worldly substance; and distress of mind,
That to a thoughtful Man was hard to shun,
And which he could not cure. A blooming Girl
Served in the house, a Favourite that had grown
Beneath his eye, encouraged by his care.
Poor now in tranquil pleasure he gave way
To thoughts of troubled pleasure; he became
A lawless Suitor to the Maid; and she
Yielded unworthily.—Unhappy Man! 1814.

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Ranged through the mountains, slept upon the earth,
Asked comfort of the open air, and found
No quiet in the darkness of the night,
No pleasure in the beauty of the day.
His flock he slighted: his paternal fields
Became a clog to him, whose spirit wished
To fly—but whither! And this gracious Church,
That wears a look so full of peace and hope
And love, benignant mother of the vale,
How fair amid her brood of cottages!
She was to him a sickness and reproach.
Much to the last remained unknown: but this
Is sure, that through remorse and grief he died;
Though pitied among men, absolved by God,
He could not find forgiveness in himself;
Nor could endure the weight of his own shame.

"Here rests a Mother. But from her I turn
And from her grave.—Behold—upon that ridge,
That,[1] stretching boldly from the mountain side,
Carries into the centre of the vale
Its rocks and woods—the Cottage where she dwelt;
And where yet dwells her faithful Partner, left
(Full eight years past) the solitary prop
Of many helpless Children. I begin
With words that[2] might be prelude to a tale
Of sorrow and dejection; but I feel
No sadness, when I think of what mine eyes
See daily in that happy family.
—Bright garland form they for the pensive brow
Of their undrooping Father's widowhood,
Those six fair Daughters, budding yet—not one,
Not one of all the band, a full-blown flower.

[1] 1827.
Which, ... 1814.

[2] 1827.
. . which . . . . . . 1814.

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Deprest, and desolate of soul, as once
That Father was, and filled with anxious fear,
Now, by experience taught, he stands assured,
That God, who takes away, yet takes not half
Of what he seems to take; or gives it back,
Not to our prayer, but far beyond our prayer;
He gives it—the boon produce of a soil
Which our endeavours have refused to till,
And hope hath never watered. The Abode,
Whose grateful owner can attest these truths,
Even were the object nearer to our sight,
Would seem in no distinction to surpass
The rudest habitations. Ye might think
That it had sprung self-raised from earth, or grown
Out of the living rock, to be adorned
By nature only; but, if thither led,
Ye would discover, then, a studious work
Of many fancies, prompting many hands.

"Brought from the woods the honeysuckle twines
Around the porch, and seems, in that trim place,
A plant no longer wild; the cultured rose
There blossoms, strong in health, and will be soon
Roof-high; the wild pink crowns the garden-wall,
And with the flowers are intermingled stones
Sparry and bright, rough scatterings[1] of the hills.
These ornaments, that fade not with the year,
A hardy Girl continues to provide;
Who, mounting fearlessly the rocky heights,
Her Father's prompt attendant, does for him
All that a boy could do, but with delight
More keen and prouder daring; yet hath she,
Within the garden, like the rest, a bed
For her own flowers and favourite herbs, a space,
By sacred charter, holden for her use.
—These, and whatever else the garden bears

[1] 1827.
. . . the scatterings . . . 1814.

Of fruit or flower, permission asked or not,
I freely gather; and my leisure draws
A not unfrequent pastime from the hum
Of bees around their range of sheltered hives
Busy in that enclosure; while the rill,[1]
That sparkling thrids the rocks, attunes his voice
To the pure course of human life which there
Flows on in solitude. But, when the gloom
Of night is falling round my steps, then most
This Dwelling charms me; often I stop short,[2]
(Who could refrain?) and feed by stealth my sight
With prospect of the company within,
Laid open through the blazing window:—there
I see the eldest Daughter at her wheel
Spinning amain, as if to overtake
The never-halting time; or, in her turn,
Teaching some Novice of the sisterhood
That skill in this or other household work,
Which, from her Father's honoured hand, herself,
While she was yet a little-one, had learned.
Mild Man! he is not gay, but they are gay;
And the whole house seems filled with gaiety.
—Thrice happy, then, the Mother may be deemed,
The Wife, from whose consolatory grave[3]
I turned, that ye in mind might witness where,
And how, her Spirit yet survives on earth!"

---

[1] 1845.

. . . . . from the sight
Of the Bees murmuring round their sheltered hives
In that Enclosure; while the mountain rill, 1814.

[2] 1827.

Flows on in solitude from year to year.
—But at the closing-in of night, then most
This Dwelling charms me. Covered by the gloom,
Then, in my walks, I oftentimes stop short, 1814.

[3] 1832.

The Wife, who rests beneath that turf, from which
1814.

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Book Sixth, continued in Editions of 1814 *and* 1820 *only*

"The next three Ridges—those upon the left—
By close connexion with our present thoughts
Tempt me to add, in praise of humble worth,
Their brief and unobtrusive history.
—One Hillock, ye may note, is small and low,
Sunk almost to a level with the plain
By weight of time; the Others, undepressed,
Are bold and swelling. There a Husband sleeps,
Deposited, in pious confidence
Of glorious resurrection with the just,
Near the loved Partner of his early days;
And, in the bosom of that family mold,
A second Wife is gathered to his side;
The approved Assistant of an arduous course
From his mid noon of manhood to old age!
He also of his Mate deprived, was left
Alone—'mid many Children; One a Babe
Orphaned as soon as born. Alas! 'tis not
In course of nature that a Father's wing
Should warm these Little-ones; and can he *feed?*
That was a thought of agony more keen.
For, hand in hand with Death, by strange mishap
And chance-encounter on their diverse road,
The ghastlier shape of Poverty had entered
Into that House, unfeared and unforeseen.
He had stepped forth, in time of urgent need,
The generous Surety of a Friend: and now
The widowed Father found that all his rights
In his paternal fields were undermined.
Landless he was and pennyless.—The dews
Of night and morn that wet the mountain sides,
The bright stars twinkling on their dusky tops,
Were conscious of the pain that drove him forth
From his own door, he knew not when—to range
He knew not where; distracted was his brain,

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His heart was cloven ; and full oft he prayed,
In blind despair, that God would take them all.
—But suddenly, as if in one kind moment
To encourage and reprove, a gleam of light
Broke from the very bosom of that cloud
Which darkened the whole prospect of his days.
For He, who now possessed the joyless right
To force the Bondsman from his house and lands,
In pity, and by admiration urged
Of his unmurmuring and considerate mind
Meekly submissive to the law's decree,
Lightened the penalty with liberal hand.
—The desolate Father raised his head, and looked
On the wide world in hope. Within these walls,
In course of time was solemnized the vow
Whereby a virtuous Woman, of grave years
And of prudential habits, undertook
The sacred office of a wife to him,
Of Mother to his helpless family.
—Nor did she fail, in nothing did she fail,
Through various exercise of twice ten years,
Save in some partial fondness for that Child
Which at the birth she had received, the Babe
Whose heart had known no Mother but herself.
—By mutual efforts ; by united hopes ;
By daily-growing help of boy and girl,
Trained early to participate that zeal
Of industry, which runs before the day
And lingers after it ; by strong restraint
Of an economy which did not check
The heart's more generous motions tow'rds themselves
Or to their neighbours ; and by trust in God ;
This Pair insensibly subdued the fears
And troubles that beset their life : and thus
Did the good Father and his second Mate
Redeem at length their plot of smiling fields.
These, at this day, the eldest Son retains :
The younger Offspring, through the busy world,

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Have all been scattered wide, by various fates;
But each departed from the native Vale,
In beauty flourishing, and moral worth."

Book Seventh

THE CHURCH-YARD AMONG THE MOUNTAINS—*Continued*

ARGUMENT

Impression of these Narratives upon the Author's mind—Pastor invited to give account of certain Graves that lie apart—Clergyman and his Family—Fortunate influence of change of situation—Activity in extreme old age—Another Clergyman, a character of resolute Virtue—Lamentations over mis-directed applause—Instance of less exalted excellence in a deaf man—Elevated character of a blind man—Reflection upon Blindness—Interrupted by a Peasant who passes—his animal cheerfulness and careless vivacity—He occasions a digression on the fall of beautiful and interesting Trees—A female Infant's Grave—Joy at her Birth—Sorrow at her Departure—A youthful Peasant—his patriotic enthusiasm and distinguished qualities—his[1] *untimely death—Exultation of the Wanderer, as a patriot, in this Picture—Solitary how affected—Monument of a Knight—Traditions concerning him—Peroration of the Wanderer on the transitoriness of things and the revolutions of society—Hints at his own past Calling—Thanks the Pastor.*

WHILE thus from theme to theme the Historian passed,
The words he uttered, and the scene that lay
Before our eyes, awakened in my mind
Vivid remembrance of those long-past hours;
When, in the hollow of some shadowy vale,
(What time the splendour of the setting sun

[1] 1836.
his patriotic enthusiasm—distinguished qualities—and
1814.

Lay beautiful on Snowdon's sovereign brow,[1]
On Cader Idris, or huge Penmanmaur)
A wandering Youth, I listened with delight
To pastoral melody or warlike air,*
Drawn from the chords of the ancient British harp
By some accomplished Master, while he sate
Amid the quiet of the green recess,
And there did inexhaustibly dispense
An interchange of soft or solemn tunes,
Tender or blithe; now, as the varying mood
Of his own spirit urged,—now, as a voice
From youth or maiden, or some honoured chief
Of his compatriot villagers (that hung
Around him, drinking in the impassioned notes
Of the time-hallowed minstrelsy) required
For their heart's ease or pleasure. Strains of power
Were they, to seize and occupy the sense;
But to a higher mark than song can reach
Rose this pure eloquence. And, when the stream
Which overflowed the soul was passed away,
A consciousness remained that it had left,
Deposited upon the silent shore
Of memory, images and precious thoughts,
That shall not die, and cannot be destroyed.

"These grassy heaps lie amicably close,"
Said I, "like surges heaving in the wind
Along[2] the surface of a mountain pool:
Whence comes it, then, that yonder we behold
Five graves, and only five, that rise together

[1] 1827.
. . . . . . craggy top, 1814.

[2] 1836.
Upon . . . . 1814.

* In the end of May and in June 1791, Wordsworth went with his friend Jones on a pedestrian tour in Wales.—Ed.

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Unsociably sequestered, and encroaching[1]
On the smooth play-ground of the village-school?" *

The Vicar answered,—"No disdainful pride
In them who rest beneath, nor any course
Of strange or tragic accident, hath helped
To place those hillocks in that lonely guise.
—Once more look forth, and follow with your sight
The length of road that[2] from yon mountain's base
Through bare enclosures stretches, 'till its line
Is lost within[3] a little tuft of trees; †
Then, reappearing in a moment, quits
The cultured fields; and up the heathy waste,
Mounts, as you see, in mazes serpentine,
Led towards[4] an easy outlet of the vale. ‡
That little shady spot, that sylvan tuft,
By which the road is hidden, also hides
A cottage from our view; though I discern
(Ye scarcely can) amid its sheltering trees
The smokeless chimney-top.—

[1] 1827.

. . . . . that lie apart,
Unsociable company and sad;
And, furthermore, appearing to encroach 1814.

[2] 1827.

. . . . . follow with your eyes
The length of road which . . . . . 1814.

[3] 1827.

. . among . . . . . . 1814.

[4] 1836.

Towards . . . . 1814.

* Note the exactness of the reference to the "playground of the village-school." It is described as "smooth" because it had no graves in it at that time. "The school," writes Dr. Cradock, "was then, and long afterwards, held at the house abutting the Lichgate, and the children had no playground but the churchyard. The portion of the ground nearest the school was not used for burial, until the want of room made it necessary to encroach on it. The oldest tombstone bears the date of 1777."—Ed.

† This "tuft of trees" is still standing (1896).—Ed.

‡ The road "up the heathy waste," and mounting "in mazes serpentine," is the Keswick road over Dunmail Raise, the "easy outlet of the vale."—Ed.

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"All unembowered
And naked stood that lowly Parsonage
(For such in truth it is, and appertains
To a small Chapel in the vale beyond)
When hither came its last Inhabitant.*
Rough and forbidding were the choicest roads
By which our northern wilds could then be crossed;
And into most of these secluded vales [1]
Was no access for wain, heavy or light.
So, at his dwelling-place the Priest arrived
With store of household goods, in panniers slung
On sturdy horses graced with jingling bells,
And on the back of more ignoble beast;
That, with like burthen of effects most prized
Or easiest carried, closed the motley train.
Young was I then, a school-boy of eight years;
But still, methinks, I see them as they passed
In order, drawing toward [2] their wished-for home.
—Rocked by the motion of a trusty ass
Two ruddy children hung, a well-poised freight,
Each in his basket nodding drowsily;
Their bonnets, I remember, wreathed with flowers,
Which told it was [3] the pleasant month of June;

[1] 1814.
Be crossed, and into those secluded vales C.

[2] 1832.
. . . . tow'rds . . . 1814.

[3] 1827.
Which told that 'twas . . . . 1814.
Gay offering from . . . . . MS.

* The cottage in which the parson of Wytheburn then lived still stands on the right or eastern side of the road, as you ascend the Raise, beyond the Swan Inn. It abuts on the public road about three hundred yards beyond the bridge over Tongue Ghyll beck. "The Clergyman and his family described at the beginning of the seventh book were, during many years, our principal associates in the vale of Grasmere, unless I were to except our very nearest neighbours. . . . With the single exception of the particulars of their journey to Grasmere—which, however, was exactly copied from real life in another instance—the whole that I have said of them is as faithful to the truth as words can make it." (I. F.)—Ed.

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And, close behind, the comely Matron rode,
A woman of soft speech and gracious smile,
And with a lady's mien.—From far they came,
Even from Northumbrian hills ; yet theirs had been
A merry journey, rich in pastime, cheered
By music, prank, and laughter-stirring jest ;
And freak put on, and arch word dropped—to swell
The cloud of fancy and uncouth surmise
That gathered round the slowly-moving train.
—'Whence do they come? and with what errand charged?
'Belong they to the fortune-telling tribe
'Who pitch their tents under the green-wood tree?
'Or Strollers are they,[1] furnished to enact
'Fair Rosamond,* and the Children of the Wood,†
'And, by that whiskered tabby's aid, set forth
'The lucky venture of sage Whittington,‡
'When the next village hears the show announced
'By blast of trumpet?' Plenteous was the growth
Of such conjectures, overheard, or seen
On many a staring countenance portrayed
Of boor or burgher, as they marched along.
And more than once their steadiness of face
Was put to proof, and exercise supplied
To their inventive humour, by stern looks,
And questions in authoritative tone,
From some staid guardian of the public peace,
Checking the sober steed on which he rode,

---

[1] 1836.
. . . beneath the green-wood Tree?
Or are they Strollers, ... 1814.

---

* Compare Dryden's *Epilogue to Henry II.*—

Jane Clifford was her name, as books aver:
Fair Rosamond was but her *nom de guerre.*

Also Sir Walter Scott's *Woodstock*, and *The Talisman.*—Ed.

† Compare Gay, *The Shepherd's Week*, the Sixth Pastoral, line 91—

Then sad he sung "The children in the wood."
Ah! barb'rous Uncle, stain'd with infant blood! Ed.

‡ Compare *The Prelude*, book vii. ll. 110-115 (see vol. iii. p. 251).—Ed.

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In his suspicious wisdom; oftener still,
By notice indirect, or blunt demand
From traveller halting in his own despite,
A simple curiosity to ease:
Of which adventures, that beguiled and cheered
Their grave migration, the good pair would tell,
With undiminished glee, in hoary age.

"A Priest he was by function; but his course
From his youth up, and high as manhood's noon,
(The hour of life to which he then was brought)
Had been irregular, I might say, wild;
By books unsteadied, by his pastoral care
Too little checked. An active, ardent mind;
A fancy pregnant with resource and scheme
To cheat the sadness of a rainy day;
Hands apt for all ingenious arts and games;
A generous spirit, and a body strong
To cope with stoutest champions of the bowl;
Had earned for him sure welcome, and the rights
Of a prized visitant, in the jolly hall
Of country 'squire; or at the statelier board
Of duke or earl, from scenes of courtly pomp
Withdrawn,—to while away the summer hours
In condescension among rural guests.

"With these high comrades he had revelled long,
Frolicked industriously, a simple Clerk
By hopes of coming patronage beguiled
Till the heart sickened. So, each loftier aim
Abandoning and all his showy friends,[1]

[1] 1827.

Had frolicked many a year; a simple Clerk
By hopes of coming patronage beguiled
And vexed, until the weary heart grew sick.
And so, abandoning each higher aim
And all his shewy Friends, at length he turned 1814.

Had frolicked many a year; a simple Clerk
Beguiled by hopes of coming patronage

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For a life's stay (slender it was, but sure)
He turned to this secluded chapelry;
That[1] had been offered to his doubtful choice
By an unthought-of patron. Bleak and bare
They found the cottage, their allotted home;
Naked without, and rude within; a spot
With which the Cure not long had been endowed:
And far remote the chapel stood,*—remote,
And, from his Dwelling, unapproachable,
Save through a gap high in the hills, an opening
Shadeless and shelterless, by driving showers
Frequented, and beset with howling winds.[2]
Yet cause was none, whate'er regret might hang
On his own mind, to quarrel with the choice
Or the necessity that fixed him here;
Apart from old temptations, and constrained
To punctual labour in his sacred charge.
See him a constant preacher to the poor!
And visiting, though not with saintly zeal,
Yet, when need was, with no reluctant will,

Till the heart sicken'd so each loftier aim
Abandoning, and all his showy Friends
He turned to this sequester'd Chapelry;
Kindly presented to his doubtful choice MS.

[1] 1836.
For a life's stay, though slender yet assured,
To this remote and humble Chapelry;
Which . . . . 1814.

For a life's stay, though slender yet assured,
He turned to this secluded Chapelry,
That . . . . 1827.

[2] 1836.
With which the scantily-provided Cure
Not long had been endowed: and far remote
The Chapel stood, divided from that House
By an unpeopled tract of mountain waste. 1814.

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* The chapel of Wytheburn, at the northern or Cumberland side of Dunmail Raise.—Ed.

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The sick in body, or distrest in mind;
And, by as salutary change, compelled
To rise[1] from timely sleep, and meet the day
With no engagement, in his thoughts, more proud
Or splendid than his garden could afford,
His fields, or mountains by the heath-cock ranged,
Or the[2] wild brooks; from which he now returned
Contented to partake the quiet meal
Of his own board,[3] where sat his gentle Mate
And three fair Children, plentifully fed
Though simply, from their little household farm;
Nor wanted timely treat[4] of fish or fowl
By nature yielded to his practised hand;—
To help the small but certain comings-in
Of that spare benefice. Yet not the less
Theirs was a hospitable board, and theirs
A charitable door.

"So days and years
Passed on;—the inside of that rugged house
Was trimmed and brightened by the Matron's care,
And gradually enriched with things of price,
Which might be lacked for use or ornament.
What, though no soft and costly sofa there
Insidiously stretched out its lazy length,
And no vain mirror glittered upon[5] the walls,

---

[1] 1827.
. . . . compelled,
Month after month, in that obscure Abode
To rise . . . . 1814.

[2] 1827.
Or these . . . . 1814.

[3] 1827.
Contentedly, to take a temperate meal
At his own board, ... 1814.

[4] 1836.
With acceptable treat . . . . . . 1814.

[5] 1845.
. . . . on . . 1814.

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Yet were the windows of the low abode
By shutters weather-fended, which[1] at once
Repelled the storm and deadened its loud roar.
There snow-white curtains hung in decent folds;
Tough moss, and long-enduring mountain plants,
That creep along the ground with sinuous trail,
Were nicely braided; and composed a work
Like Indian mats, that with appropriate grace
Lay at the threshold and the inner doors;
And a fair carpet, woven of homespun wool
But tinctured daintily with florid hues,
For seemliness and warmth, on festal[2] days,
Covered the smooth blue slabs of mountain-stone
With which the parlour-floor, in simplest guise
Of pastoral homesteads, had been long inlaid.*

"Those[3] pleasing works the Housewife's skill produced:
Meanwhile the unsedentary Master's hand
Was busier with his task—to rid, to plant,
To rear for food, for shelter, and delight;
A thriving covert! And when wishes, formed
In youth, and sanctioned by the riper mind,
Restored me to my native valley, here
To end my days; well pleased was I to see
The once-bare cottage, on the mountain-side,
Screen'd from assault of every bitter blast;
While the dark shadows of the summer leaves

1 . . . . . . that . . MS.

2 1827.
. . . . . . festive . . 1814.

3 1836.
These . . . . 1814.

* This house, in which Mr. Sympson lived, and which—though no longer the parsonage—still belongs to Wytheburn church, is easily identified. The "blue slabs of mountain-stone," common to all old houses in the vale, remain just as they were, when the old pastor lived, and Wordsworth was his frequent guest. The windows, too, "by shutters weather-fended," are described with minute fidelity.—Ed.

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Danced in the breeze, chequering its mossy roof.[1]
Time, which had thus afforded willing help
To beautify with nature's fairest growths[2]
This rustic tenement, had gently shed,
Upon its Master's frame, a wintry grace;
The comeliness of unenfeebled age.

"But how could I say, gently? for he still
Retained a flashing eye, a burning palm,
A stirring foot, a[3] head which beat at nights
Upon its pillow with a thousand schemes.
Few likings had he dropped, few pleasures lost;
Generous and charitable, prompt to serve;
And still his harsher passions kept their hold—
Anger and indignation. Still he loved
The sound of titled names, and talked in glee
Of long-past banquetings with high-born friends:
Then, from those lulling fits of vain delight
Uproused by recollected injury, railed
At their false ways disdainfully,—and oft
In bitterness, and with a threatening eye
Of fire, incensed beneath its hoary brow.
—Those[4] transports, with staid looks of pure good-will,
And with soft smile, his consort would reprove.
She, far behind him in the race of years,
Yet keeping her first mildness, was advanced
Far nearer, in the habit of her soul,
To that still region whither all are bound.
Him might we liken to the setting sun

[1] 1836.
. . . . . . upon its . . 1814.

[2] 1836.
. . . . growth 1814.

[3] 1827.
. . . and . . . . . . 1814.

[4] 1836.
—These . . . . 1814.

As seen not seldom[1] on some gusty day,
Struggling and bold, and shining from the west
With an inconstant and unmellowed light;
She was a soft attendant cloud, that hung
As if with wish to veil the restless orb;
From which it did itself imbibe a ray
Of pleasing lustre.—But no more of this;
I better love to sprinkle on the sod
That[2] now divides the pair, or rather say,
That[3] still unites them, praises, like heaven's dew,
Without reserve descending[4] upon both.

[5] "Our very first in eminence of years
This old Man stood, the patriarch of the Vale!

---

[1] 1827.
As I have seen it, ... 1814.

[2] 1827.
Which . . . . 1814.

[3] 1827.
Which . . . . 1814.

[4] 1827.
Without distinction falling . . . . . 1814.

[5] The following lines occur only in the editions of 1814 and 1820.

—Yoke-fellows were they long and well approved
To endure and to perform.
With frugal pains,
Yet in a course of generous discipline,
Did this poor Churchman and his Consort rear
Their progeny.—Of three—sent forth to try
The paths of fortune in the open world,
One, not endowed with firmness to resist
The suit of pleasure, to his native Vale
Returned, and humbly tilled his Father's glebe.
—The youngest Daughter, too, in duty stayed
To lighten her declining Mother's care.
But, ere the bloom was passed away which health
Preserved to adorn a cheek no longer young,
Her heart, in course of nature, finding place
For new affections, to the holy state
Of wedlock they conducted her; but still

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And, to his unmolested mansion, death
Had never come, through space of forty years;
Sparing both old and young in that abode.
Suddenly then they disappeared: not twice
Had summer scorched the fields; not twice had fallen,
On those high peaks, the first autumnal snow,
Before the greedy visiting was closed,
And the long-privileged house left empty—swept
As by a plague.* Yet no rapacious plague
Had been among them; all was gentle death,
One after one, with intervals of peace.
A happy consummation! an accord
Sweet, perfect, to be wished for! save that here
Was something which to mortal sense might sound
Like harshness,—that the old grey-headed Sire,
The oldest, he was taken last, survived
When the meek Partner of his age, his Son,
His Daughter, and that late and high-prized gift,
His little smiling Grandchild, were no more.

"'All gone, all vanished! he deprived and bare,
'How will he face the remnant of his life?
'What will become of him?' we said, and mused
In sad conjectures—'Shall we meet him now
'Haunting with rod and line the craggy brooks?
'Or shall we overhear him, as we pass,
'Striving to entertain the lonely hours
'With music?' (for he had not ceased to touch

The Bride adhering to those filial cares
Dwelt with her Mate beneath her Father's roof.

. . . . . discipline
Their progeny was reared.—Of three that tried MS.

But, ere her bloom had fled by health preserved
To decorate a cheek no longer young, MS.

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* Mrs. Sympson was twelve years her husband's junior, and she predeceased him by a year and a half.

Compare— "She, far behind him in the race of years" (l. 226).
And "Not twice had summer," etc. (l. 247). Ed.

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The harp or viol which himself had framed,
For their sweet purposes, with perfect skill.)
'What titles will he keep? will he remain
'Musician, gardener, builder, mechanist,
'A planter, and a rearer from the seed?
'A man of hope and forward-looking mind
'Even to the last!'—Such was he, unsubdued.
But Heaven was gracious; yet a little while,
And this Survivor, with his cheerful throng
Of open projects, and his [1] inward hoard
Of unsunned griefs, too many and too keen,
Was overcome by unexpected sleep,
In one blest moment. Like a shadow thrown
Softly and lightly from a passing cloud,
Death fell upon him, while reclined he lay
For noontide solace on the summer grass,
The warm lap of his mother earth: * and so,
Their lenient term of separation past,
That family (whose graves you there behold)
By yet a higher privilege once more
Were gathered to each other." †
Calm of mind
And silence waited on these closing words;
Until the Wanderer (whether moved by fear
Lest in those [2] passages of life were some

[1] 1836.
Of open schemes, and all his . . . . 1814.

[2] 1827.
. . these . . . . . . 1814.

* Old Mr. Sympson was found dead in his garden on the opposite side of the road from the cottage, in 1807, in his ninety-second year. There is now a new door into the garden, but the posts are old enough to have been there in Sympson's time.—Ed.

† The Sympsons are all buried at Grasmere. Their gravestone stands about ten yards north-west from that of their poet, not far from the monument erected in memory of Arthur Hugh Clough. There is only one stone, a low one, with a pointed top. The following is the inscription on it:—"Here lie the remains of the Reverend Jos. Sympson, Minister of Wytheburn for more than 50 years. He died June 27, 1807, aged 92; also of Mary, his wife, who died Jan. 24, 1806, aged 81; also of Eliz. Jane, their youngest Dr., who died Sep. 11, 1801, aged 37."—Ed.

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That might have touched the sick heart of his Friend
Too nearly, or intent to reinforce
His own firm spirit in degree deprest
By tender sorrow for our mortal state)
Thus silence broke:—"Behold a thoughtless Man
From vice and premature decay preserved
By useful habits, to a fitter soil
Transplanted ere too late.—The hermit, lodged
Amid[1] the untrodden desert, tells his beads,
With each repeating its allotted prayer
And thus divides and thus relieves the time;
Smooth task, with *his*[2] compared, whose mind could string,
Not scantily, bright minutes on the thread
Of keen domestic anguish; and beguile
A solitude, unchosen, unprofessed;
Till gentlest death released him.
"Far from us
Be the desire—too curiously to ask
How much of this is but the blind result
Of cordial spirits and vital temperament,
And what to higher powers is justly due.
But you, Sir, know that in a neighbouring vale *
A Priest abides before whose life such doubts
Fall to the ground; whose gifts of nature lie
Retired from notice, lost in attributes
Of reason, honourably effaced by debts
Which her poor treasure-house is content to owe,
And conquests over her dominion gained,
To which her frowardness must needs submit.
In this one Man is shown a temperance—proof
Against all trials; industry severe
And constant as the motion of the day;

[1] 1836.
In . . . . 1814.

[2] Italics were first used in 1836.

* The Duddon valley.—ED.

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Stern self-denial round him spread, with shade
That might be deemed forbidding, did not there
All generous feelings flourish and rejoice;
Forbearance, charity in deed and thought,
And resolution competent to take
Out of the bosom of simplicity
All that her holy customs recommend,
And the best ages of the world prescribe.
—Preaching, administering, in every work
Of his sublime vocation, in the walks
Of worldly intercourse between[1] man and man,
And in his humble dwelling, he appears
A labourer, with moral virtue girt,
With spiritual graces, like a glory, crowned."

"Doubt can be none," the Pastor said, "for whom
This portraiture is sketched. The great, the good,
The well-beloved, the fortunate, the wise,—
These titles emperors and chiefs have borne,
Honour assumed or given: and him, the WONDERFUL,
Our simple shepherds, speaking from the heart,
Deservedly have styled.*—From his abode
In a dependent chapelry that lies
Behind yon hill, a poor and rugged wild,†
Which in his soul he lovingly embraced,
And, having once espoused, would never quit;
Into its graveyard will ere long be borne
That lowly, great, good Man. A simple stone[2]

---

[1] 1836.
. . . . 'twixt . . . 1814.

[2] 1845.
. . . . . would never quit;
Hither, ere long, that lowly, great, good Man
Will be conveyed. An unelaborate Stone 1814.

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* See the notes to the Duddon sonnets.—ED.

† The chapelry of Seathwaite. The reference to "yon hill" suggests that the conversation is carried on at Hackett (rather than Grasmere), whence Wetherlam—which concealed the Duddon valley—would be visible.—ED.

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May cover him ;* and by its help, perchance,
A century shall hear his name pronounced,
With images attendant on the sound ;
Then, shall the slowly-gathering twilight close
In utter night ; and of his course remain
No cognizable vestiges, no more
Than of this breath, which shapes [1] itself in words
To speak of him, and instantly dissolves."

The Pastor pressed by thoughts which round his theme
Still linger'd, after a brief pause, resumed ;
" Noise [2] is there not enough in doleful war,
But that the heaven-born poet must stand forth,
And lend the echoes of his sacred shell,
To multiply and aggravate the din ?
Pangs are there not enough in hopeless love—
And, in requited passion, all too much
Of turbulence, anxiety, and fear—
But that the minstrel of the rural shade
Must tune his pipe, insidiously to nurse
The perturbation in the suffering breast,
And propagate its kind, far as he may ? [3]
—Ah who (and with such rapture as befits
The hallowed theme) will rise and celebrate

Into its graveyard will ere long be borne
That lowly great good man. A simple stone
May cover him, and by that record's help, C.

[1] 1827.
. . . . frames . . . 1814.

[2] 1845.
. . . . and instantly dissolves.
—Noise . . . . 1814.

[3] 1832.
. . . . . where'er he may ? 1814.

---

* It is so. In the churchyard of Seathwaite a plain stone slab records the fact that he died on the 25th June 1802, in the ninety-third year of his age.—Ed.

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The good man's purposes and deeds;[1] retrace
His struggles, his discomfitures[2] deplore,
His triumphs hail, and glorify his end;
That virtue, like the fumes and vapoury clouds
Through fancy's heat redounding in the brain,
And like the soft infections of the heart,
By charm of measured words may spread o'er field,
Hamlet, and town;[3] and piety survive
Upon the lips of men in hall or bower;
Not for reproof, but high and warm delight,
And grave encouragement, by song inspired?
—Vain thought! but wherefore murmur or repine?
The memory of the just survives in heaven:
And, without sorrow, will the[4] ground receive
That venerable clay. Meanwhile the best
Of what lies here[5] confines us to degrees
In excellence less difficult to reach,
And milder worth: nor need we travel far
From those to whom our last regards were paid,
For such example.
"Almost at the root
Of that tall pine, the shadow of whose bare
And slender stem, while here I sit at eve,
Oft stretches toward[6] me, like a long straight path
Traced faintly in the greensward; there, beneath

---

[1] 1836.
. . . deeds and purposes; . . 1814.

[2] 1836.
. . . . discomfiture . . 1814.

[3] 1827.
. . . . . through fields
And cottages, ... 1814.

[4] 1845.
. . . . . this . . . 1814.

[5] 1845.
Of what it holds. . . . . . 1814.

[6] 1836.
. . . tow'rds . . . . 1814.

A plain blue stone, a gentle Dalesman lies,[1]
From whom, in early childhood, was withdrawn
The precious gift of hearing.* He grew up
From year to year in loneliness of soul;
And this deep mountain-valley was to him
Soundless, with all its streams.† The bird of dawn
Did never rouse this Cottager from sleep
With startling summons; not for his delight
The vernal cuckoo shouted; not for him
Murmured the labouring bee. When stormy winds
Were working the broad bosom of the lake
Into a thousand thousand sparkling waves,
Rocking the trees, or driving cloud on cloud
Along the sharp edge of yon lofty crags,‡
The agitated scene before his eye

---

[1] 1814.

Beneath that pine which rears its dusky head
Aloft, and covered by a plain blue stone
Briefly inscribed, a gentle Dalesman lies;
Quoted from MS. in *Essay upon Epitaphs.* 1810.

---

* "The Deaf Man, whose epitaph may be seen in the churchyard at the head of Hawes Water, and whose qualities of mind and heart, and their benign influence in conjunction with his privation, I had from his relatives on the spot."—I. F.

Thomas Holme of Chapel Hill was his name. On his epitaph it is said "he was deprived of the sense of hearing in his youth, and lived about 58 years without the comfort of hearing one word. He reconciled himself to his misfortune by reading, and useful employment." He died in 1773, "aged 67 years."

From this it is clear that we must not look for the "tall pine" or the "plain blue stone" in Grasmere churchyard! and that the localities as well as the narratives of *The Excursion* are at times composite.—Ed.

† For another reference to the streams in the Grasmere Vale, compare the *Lines composed at Grasmere*, when Mr. Fox's death was hourly expected (vol. iv. p. 47)—

Loud is the Vale! the Voice is up
With which she speaks when storms are gone,
A mighty unison of streams!
Of all her Voices, One. Ed.

‡ Either Stone Arthur, or Loughrigg. Compare the lines *To the Clouds*, suggested by their appearance on Nab Scar—

Army of Clouds! ye wingèd Host in troops
Ascending from behind the motionless brow
Of that tall rock, etc. Ed.

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Was silent as a picture: evermore
Were all things silent, wheresoe'er he moved.
Yet, by the solace of his own pure thoughts
Upheld, he duteously pursued the round
Of rural labours; the steep mountain-side
Ascended, with his staff and faithful dog;
The plough he guided, and the scythe he swayed;
And the ripe corn before his sickle fell
Among the jocund reapers. For himself,
All watchful and industrious as he was,
He wrought not: neither field nor flock he owned:
No wish for wealth had place within his mind;
Nor husband's [1] love, nor father's hope or care.

"Though born a younger brother, need was none
That from the floor of his paternal home
He should depart, to plant himself anew.
And when, mature in manhood, he beheld
His parents laid in earth, no loss ensued
Of rights to him; but he remained well pleased,
By the pure bond of independent love,
An inmate of a second family;
The fellow-labourer and friend of him
To whom the small inheritance had fallen.
—Nor deem that his mild presence was a weight
That pressed upon his brother's house; for books
Were ready comrades whom he could not tire;
Of whose society the blameless Man
Was never satiate. Their familiar voice,
Even to old age, with unabated charm
Beguiled his leisure hours; refreshed his thoughts;
Beyond its natural elevation raised
His introverted spirit; and bestowed
Upon his life an outward dignity
Which all acknowledged. The dark winter night,

[1] 1814.
No husband's . . . . 1810.

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The stormy day, each had[1] its own resource;
Song of the muses, sage historic tale,
Science severe, or word of holy Writ
Announcing immortality and joy
To the assembled spirits of just men
Made perfect, and from injury secure.[2]
—Thus soothed at home, thus busy in the field,
To no perverse suspicion he gave way,
No languor, peevishness, nor vain complaint:
And they, who were about him, did not fail
In reverence, or in courtesy; they prized
His gentle manners: and his peaceful smiles,
The gleams of his slow-varying countenance,
Were met with answering sympathy and love.

"At length, when sixty years and five were told,
A slow disease insensibly consumed
The powers of nature: and a few short steps
Of friends and kindred bore him from his home
(Yon cottage shaded by the woody crags)
To the profounder stillness of the grave.
—Nor was his funeral denied the grace
Of many tears, virtuous and thoughtful grief;
Heart-sorrow rendered sweet by gratitude.
And now that monumental stone preserves
His name, and unambitiously relates
How long, and by what kindly outward aids,
And in what pure contentedness of mind,
The sad privation was by him endured.
—And yon tall pine-tree, whose composing sound
Was wasted on the good Man's living ear,
Hath now its own peculiar sanctity;

---

[1] 1836.
. . . had each . . . 1814.

[2] 1836.
To the assembled spirits of the just
From imperfection and decay secure. 1814.

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And, at the touch of every wandering breeze,
Murmurs, not idly, o'er his peaceful grave.

"Soul-cheering Light, most bountiful of things!
Guide of our way, mysterious comforter!
Whose sacred influence, spread through earth and heaven,
We all too thanklessly participate,
Thy gifts were utterly withheld from him
Whose place of rest is near yon ivied porch.*
Yet, of the wild brooks ask if he complained;
Ask of the channelled rivers if they held
A safer, easier, more determined, course.
What terror doth it strike into the mind
To think of one, blind and alone, advancing
Straight toward some precipice's airy brink![1]
But, timely warned, *He* would have stayed his steps,
Protected, say enlightened, by his ear;
And on the very edge[2] of vacancy
Not more endangered than a man whose eye
Beholds the gulf beneath.—No floweret blooms
Throughout the lofty range of these rough hills,
Nor[3] in the woods, that could from him conceal
Its birth-place; none whose figure did not live

---

[1] 1845.

To think of One, who cannot see, advancing
Towards some precipice's airy brink! 1814.

Toward . . . . 1832.

To think of one, who cannot see, advancing
Straight toward some precipice's airy brink! 1836.

[2] 1827.

. . . . . . brink . . 1814.

[3] 1836.

Or . . . . 1814.

---

* "The Blind Man was John Gough, of Kendal, a man known, far beyond his neighbourhood, for his talents and attainments in natural history and science."—I. F. For an account of John Gough, see Appendix, and note * p. 304.—Ed.

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Upon his touch.* The bowels of the earth
Enriched with knowledge his industrious mind;
The ocean paid him tribute from the stores
Lodged in her bosom; and, by science led,
His genius mounted to the plains of heaven.
—Methinks I see him—how his eye-balls rolled,
Beneath his ample brow, in darkness paired,—
But each instinct with spirit; † and the frame
Of the whole countenance alive with thought,
Fancy, and understanding; while the voice
Discoursed of natural or [1] moral truth
With eloquence, and such authentic power,
That, in his presence, humbler knowledge stood
Abashed, and tender pity overawed." ‡

"A noble—and, to unreflecting minds,
A marvellous spectacle," the Wanderer said,
"Beings like these present! But proof abounds
Upon the earth that faculties, which seem
Extinguished, do not, *therefore*, cease to be.

---

[1] 1827.
. . . . . . and . . 1814.

---

* This John Gough, a friend of Wordsworth's, was one of the first mathematicians of his time, and a most successful teacher. Whewell and King (senior wranglers) were amongst his pupils. So was Dalton. Gough had been deprived of sight by an attack of small-pox, when he was between two and three years of age. He was a great botanist, as is mentioned in the text; and the following remarkable circumstance is recorded of him, showing at once his marvellous memory, and the extreme delicacy of his sense of *touch*. In the *Elegiac Verses* on his brother John, Wordsworth had described the moss campion, *Silene acaulis*—

> It grows upon its native bed
> Beside our Parting-place;
> There, cleaving to the ground, it lies
> With multitude of purple eyes,
> Spangling a cushion green like moss.

This poem was read to Gough in 1805 (it was not published till 1845), and twelve years afterwards, in 1817, a specimen of the moss campion was placed in his hand, and he said at once, "I have never examined this plant before, but it is *Silene acaulis*." Compare Atkinson's *Worthies of Cumberland*, and note E in the Appendix to this volume, p. 398.—Ed.

† Compare *Paradise Lost*, book vi. l. 752.—Ed.

‡ See note * above.—Ed.

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And to the mind among her powers of sense
This transfer is permitted,—not alone
That the bereft their recompense may win ;[1]
But for remoter purposes of love
And charity ; nor last nor least for this,
That to the imagination may be given
A type and shadow of an awful truth ;[2]
How, likewise, under sufferance divine,
Darkness is banished from the realms of death,
By man's imperishable spirit, quelled.
Unto the men who see not as we see
Futurity was thought, in ancient times,
To be laid open, and they prophesied.
And know we not that from the blind have flowed
The highest, holiest, raptures of the lyre ;
And wisdom married to immortal verse ?" *

Among the humbler Worthies, at our feet
Lying insensible to human praise,
Love, or regret,—*whose* lineaments would next
Have been portrayed, I guess not ; but it chanced
That, near the quiet church-yard where we sate,
A team of horses, with a ponderous freight
Pressing behind, adown a rugged slope,
Whose sharp descent confounded their array,
Came at that moment, ringing noisily.

"Here," said the Pastor, "do we muse, and mourn
The waste of death ; and lo ! the giant oak

---

[1] 1827.
. . . may win their recompence ; 1814.

[2] 1814.
Not least for this that here might be perceived
A type and shadow of that awful truth. C.

---

* Compare *L'Allegro*, l. 137—
Married to immortal verse. ED.

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Stretched on his bier—that massy timber wain ;
Nor fail to note the Man who guides the team."

He was a peasant of the lowest class :
Grey locks profusely round his temples hung
In clustering curls, like ivy, which the bite
Of winter cannot thin ; the fresh air lodged
Within his cheek, as light within a cloud ;
And he returned our greeting with a smile.
When he had passed, the Solitary spake ;
"A Man he seems of cheerful yesterdays
And confident to-morrows ; with a face
Not worldly-minded, for it bears too much
Of Nature's impress,—gaiety and health,
Freedom and hope ; but keen, withal, and shrewd.
His gestures note,—and hark ! his tones of voice
Are all vivacious as his mien and looks."

The Pastor answered. "You have read him well.
Year after year is added to his store
With *silent* increase : summers, winters—past,
Past or to come ; yea, boldly might I say,
Ten summers and ten winters of a space[1]
That lies beyond life's ordinary bounds,
Upon his sprightly vigour cannot fix
The obligation of an anxious mind,
A pride in having, or a fear to lose ;
Possessed like outskirts of some large domain,
By any one more thought of than by him
Who holds the land in fee, its careless lord !
Yet is the creature rational, endowed
With foresight ; hears, too, every sabbath day,
The christian promise with attentive ear ;
Nor will, I trust, the Majesty of Heaven
Reject the incense offered up by him,

[1] 1827.
. . . . of the space 1814.

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Though of the kind which beasts and birds present [1]
In grove or pasture; cheerfulness of soul,
From trepidation and repining free.
How many scrupulous worshippers fall down
Upon their knees, and daily homage pay
Less worthy, less religious even, than his!

"This qualified respect, the old Man's due,
Is paid without reluctance; but in truth,"
(Said the good Vicar with a fond half-smile)
"I feel at times a motion of despite
Towards one, whose bold contrivances and skill,
As you have seen, bear such conspicuous part
In works of havoc; taking from these vales,
One after one, their proudest ornaments.
Full oft his doings leave me to deplore
Tall ash-tree, sown by winds, by vapours nursed,
In the dry crannies of the pendent rocks;
Light birch, aloft upon the horizon's edge,
A veil [2] of glory for the ascending moon;
And oak whose roots by noontide dew were damped,
And on whose forehead inaccessible
The raven lodged in safety.—Many a ship
Launched into Morecamb-bay to *him* hath owed [3]
Her strong knee-timbers, and the mast that bears
The loftiest of her pendants; He, from park
Or forest, fetched the enormous axle-tree

---

[1] 1827.

. . . . . . with attentive ear,
Nor disbelieves the tidings which he hears.
Meanwhile the incense offered up by him
Is of the kind which beasts and birds present 1814.

[2] 1827.

. . . . . . horizon's edge,
Transparent texture, framing in the east
A veil . . . . 1814.

[3] 1827.

. . . . . . hath owed to him 1814.

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That whirls (how slow itself!) ten thousand spindles[1]
And the vast engine labouring in the mine,
Content with meaner prowess, must have lacked
The trunk and body of its[2] marvellous strength,
If his undaunted enterprise had failed
Among the mountain coves.
"Yon household fir,[3]
A guardian planted to fence off the blast,
But towering high the roof above, as if
Its humble destination were forgot—
That sycamore, which annually holds
Within its shade, as in a stately tent *
On all sides open to the fanning breeze,
A grave assemblage, seated while they shear
The fleece-encumbered flock—the JOYFUL ELM,
Around whose trunk the maidens[4] dance in May—
And the LORD'S OAK—would plead their several rights
In vain, if he were master of their fate;
His sentence[5] to the axe would doom them all.

---

[1] 1827.
The loftiest of her pendants. Help he gives
To lordly mansion rising far or near;
The enormous wheel that turns ten thousand spindles, 1814.
. . . pendants. And the wheel
Enormous, that turns round ten thousand spindles, MS.

[2] 1827.
. . . . . their . . . 1814.

[3] 1827.
Among the mountain coves, or keen research
In forest, park, or chace. Yon household Fir, 1814.

[4] 1827.
. . . . . lasses . . . 1814.

[5] 1827.
. . . . . . of their fate.
Not one would have his pitiful regard,
For prized accommodation, pleasant use,

---

* See Wordsworth's note, p. 389.—ED.

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But, green in age and lusty as he is,
And promising to keep his hold on earth[1]
Less, as might seem, in rivalship with men
Than with the forest's more enduring growth,
His own appointed hour will come at last;
And, like the haughty Spoilers of the world,
This keen Destroyer, in his turn, must fall.

"Now from the living pass we once again:
From Age," the Priest continued, "turn your thoughts;
From Age, that often unlamented drops,
And mark that daisied hillock, three spans long! *
—Seven lusty Sons sate daily round the board
Of Gold-rill † side; and, when the hope had ceased
Of other progeny, a Daughter then
Was given, the crowning bounty of the whole;

For dignity, for old acquaintance sake,
For ancient custom or distinguished name.
His sentence . . . . . . 1814.

[1] 1827.
And promising to stand from year to year, 1814.

---

* Compare Burger's *Pfarrer's Tochter*—
Drei Spannen lang. Ed.

† "This refers to the Greens, a very ancient Grasmere family, settled for generations at Pavement End, which, with a considerable tract of land, is still their property. The poet describes them as dwelling at Gold-rill side, and I have been told that the name was a pure invention to avoid the realism of 'Grasmere,' or 'Pavement End.' Such, however, is not exactly the case. On enquiry from Mr. Fleming Green, one of the family now residing in Grasmere, I find that a small stream to which Wordsworth himself, from some fancy of his own, had given the name of Gold-rill, ran formerly by the road side, and then turned by the side of the farm at Pavement End towards the Lake. When the road was reconstructed, the rill was covered, and can no more be seen there; but it issues freely from a culvert at the back of the premises, and runs by the hedge-side to the Lake. Mr. Fleming Green remembers the rill as it was, and pointed out its course to me. He is a son of one of the 'seven lusty sons' mentioned in the poem. (Mr. Green would read 'six.') He said 'we stuck to the old home till we could no longer stand up in it.' He is one of a race well termed 'lusty.' The 'hoary grandsire' and many of his descendants lie buried in a long row, a little to the left of the path leading from the Church to the lich-gate at the north. Among them is little Margaret (her name and age not unrecorded), but her 'daisied hillock three spans long' is now merged in the larger graves of her more aged kindred." (Dr. Cradock to the Editor.) —Ed.

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And so acknowledged with a tremulous joy
Felt to the centre of that heavenly calm[1]
With which by nature every mother's soul
Is stricken in the moment when her throes
Are ended, and her ears have heard the cry
Which tells her that a living child is born;
And she lies conscious, in a blissful rest,
That the dread storm is weathered by them both.

"The Father—him at this unlooked-for gift
A bolder transport seizes. From the side
Of his bright hearth, and from his open door,
Day after day[2] the gladness is diffused
To all that come, almost to all[3] that pass;
Invited, summoned, to partake the cheer
Spread on the never-empty board, and drink
Health and good wishes to his new-born girl,
From cups replenished by his joyous hand.
—Those seven fair brothers variously were moved
Each by the thoughts best suited to his years:
But most of all and with most thankful mind
The hoary grandsire felt himself enriched;
A happiness that ebbed not, but remained
To fill the total measure of his[4] soul!
—From the low tenement, his own abode,
Whither, as to a little private cell,

---

[1] 1827.
Was given, the crown and glory of the whole!
Welcomed with joy, whose penetrating power
Was not unfelt amid that heavenly calm 1814.

[2] 1827.
. . . . from his open door,
And from the laurel-shaded seat thereby,
Day after day . . . . . . 1814.

[3] 1836.
. . . . and almost all . . 1814.

[4] 1836.
. . . . the . 1814.

He had withdrawn from bustle, care, and noise,
To spend the sabbath of old age in peace,
Once every day he duteously repaired
To rock the cradle of the slumbering babe:
For in that female infant's name he heard
The silent name of his departed wife;
Heart-stirring music! hourly heard that name;
Full blest he was, 'Another Margaret Green,'
Oft did he say, 'was come to Gold-rill side.'

"Oh! pang unthought of, as the precious boon
Itself had been unlooked-for; oh! dire stroke
Of desolating anguish for them all!
—Just as the Child could totter on the floor,
And, by some friendly finger's help upstayed,
Range round the garden walk, while she perchance
Was catching at some novelty of spring,
Ground-flower, or glossy insect from its cell
Drawn by the sunshine—at that hopeful season[1]
The winds of March, smiting insidiously,[2]
Raised in the tender passage of the throat
Viewless obstruction; whence, all unforewarned,
The household lost their pride and soul's delight.
—But time hath power[3] to soften all regrets,
And prayer and thought can bring to worst distress
Due resignation. Therefore, though some tears

1 Range round the garden-walk, whose first Spring flowers
Were peeping forth, even at that hopeful time, MS.

2 1827.
Range round the garden-walk, whose low ground-flowers
Were peeping forth, shy messengers of spring,—
Even at that hopeful time,—the winds of March,
One sunny day, smiting insidiously, 1814.

3 1827.
. . . . . their hope and soul's delight.
—But Providence, that gives and takes away
By his own law, is merciful and just;
Time wants not power . . . . 1814.

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Fail not to spring from either Parent's eye
Oft as they hear of sorrow like their own,
Yet this departed Little-one, too long
The innocent troubler of their quiet, sleeps
In what may now be called a peaceful bed.*

"On a bright day—so calm and bright, it seemed †
To us, with our sad spirits, heavenly-fair—
These mountains echoed to an unknown sound; [1]
A volley, thrice repeated o'er the Corse
Let down into the hollow of that grave,
Whose shelving sides are red with naked mould.
Ye rains of April, duly wet this earth!
Spare, burning sun of midsummer, these sods,
That they may knit together, and therewith
Our thoughts unite in kindred quietness!
Nor so the Valley shall forget her loss.
Dear Youth, by young and old alike beloved, ‡
To me as precious as my own!—Green herbs

---

[1] 1836.

. . . . . . a peaceful grave.
On a bright day, the brightest of the year,
These mountains echoed with an unknown sound, 1814.

---

* "Of the infant's grave I will only say, it is an exact picture of what fell under my own observation."—I. F.

† Compare George Herbert's

Sweet Day, so cool, so calm and bright. Ed.

‡ "This young volunteer bore the name of Dawson. . . . The premature death of this gallant young man was much lamented, and as an attendant upon the funeral, I myself witnessed the ceremony, and the effect of it as described in the poem."—I. F. See the whole of the note (p. 13).

"In *The Excursion*, book vii., is an animated account of the life and death of a young volunteer, one of a company of eighty men, which, when England was threatened with a French invasion, was formed in the Lake District, and was named 'Wedgwood's Mountaineers,' having by him in a generous spirit of patriotism been clothed and armed, and this in the completest manner, as riflemen." See *Fragmentary Remains, Literary and Scientific, of Sir Humphry Davy, Bart.* (1858), p. 109. The Wedgwood referred to was the Thomas Wedgwood who assisted Coleridge so opportunely.

In 1806 Wordsworth wrote of Dawson: "His calm and dignified manner, united with his tall form and beautiful face, produced in me an impression of sublimity beyond what I ever experienced from the appearance of any other human being."—Ed.

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May creep (I wish that they would softly creep)
Over thy last abode, and we may pass
Reminded less imperiously of thee;—
The ridge itself may sink into the breast
Of earth, the great abyss, and be no more;
Yet shall not thy remembrance leave our hearts,
Thy image disappear!
"The Mountain-ash
No eye can overlook, when 'mid a grove
Of yet unfaded trees she lifts her head
Decked [1] with autumnal berries, that outshine
Spring's richest blossoms; and ye may have marked,[2]
By a brook-side or solitary tarn,
How she her station doth adorn: the pool
Glows at her feet, and all the gloomy rocks
Are brightened round her. In his native vale
Such and so glorious did this Youth appear;
A sight that kindled pleasure in all hearts
By his ingenuous beauty, by the gleam
Of his fair eyes, by his capacious brow,
By all the graces with which nature's hand
Had lavishly [3] arrayed him. As old bards
Tell in their idle songs of wandering gods,
Pan or Apollo, veiled in human form:
Yet, like the sweet-breathed violet of the shade
Discovered in their own despite to sense

---

[1] 1827.
. . . . . . The mountain Ash,
Decked . . . . 1814.

. . . . . . The mountain ash
Ye may have mark'd mid yet unfaded woods
Deck'd with autumnal berries that outshine
The richest blossoms of the Spring, or seen MS.

[2] 1827.
Spring's richest blossoms, yields a splendid show,
Amid the leafy woods; and ye have seen, 1814.

[3] 1827.
Had bounteously . . . . . . 1814.

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Of mortals (if such fables without blame
May find chance-mention on this sacred ground)
So, through a simple rustic garb's disguise,
And through the impediment of rural cares,
In him revealed a scholar's genius shone;
And so, not wholly hidden from men's sight,
In him the spirit of a hero walked
Our unpretending valley.—How the quoit
Whizzed from the Stripling's arm! If touched by him,
The inglorious foot-ball mounted to the pitch
Of the lark's flight,—or shaped a rainbow curve,
Aloft, in prospect of the shouting field!
The indefatigable fox had learned
To dread his perseverance in the chase.[1]
With admiration would he lift[2] his eyes
To the wide-ruling eagle, and his hand
Was loth to assault the majesty he loved:
Else had the strongest fastnesses proved weak
To guard the royal brood. The sailing glead,
The wheeling swallow, and the darting snipe;
The sportive sea-gull dancing with the waves,
And cautious water-fowl, from distant climes,
Fixed at their seat, the centre of the Mere,
Were subject to young Oswald's steady aim,
And lived by his forbearance.
"From the coast

---

[1] 1814.

Fleeing for life the fox was taught to dread
His voice and indefatigable feet. C.

Or,

The fox in many wiles however versed
Or spent in strength by forward flight
O'er { hill and vale / vale and stream } was taught to dread
His voice and indefatigable feet
Still foremost, longest in the obstinate chase. C.

[2] 1827.

. . . . he could lift . . 1814.

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Of France a boastful Tyrant hurled his threats;[1] *
Our Country marked the preparation vast[2]
Of hostile forces; and she called—with voice
That filled her plains, that[3] reached her utmost shores,
And in remotest vales was heard—to arms!
—Then, for the first time, here you might have seen
The shepherd's grey to martial scarlet changed,
That flashed uncouthly through the woods and fields.
Ten hardy Striplings, all in bright attire,
And graced with shining weapons, weekly marched,
From this lone valley, to a central spot
Where, in assemblage with the flower and choice
Of the surrounding district, they might learn
The rudiments of war; ten—hardy, strong,
And valiant; but young Oswald, like a chief
And yet a modest comrade, led them forth
From their shy solitude, to face the world,
With a gay confidence and seemly pride;
Measuring the soil beneath their happy feet
Like Youths released from labour, and yet bound
To most laborious service, though to them
A festival of unencumbered ease;
The inner spirit keeping holiday,
Like vernal ground to sabbath sunshine left.

"Oft have I marked him, at some leisure hour,
Stretched on the grass, or seated in the shade,

---

[1] 1836.
. . . . steady aim.
From Gallia's coast a Tyrant's threats were hurled; 1814.

From Gallia's coast a Tyrant hurled his threats; 1827.

[2] 1827.
. . . . . preparations vast 1814.

[3] 1832.
. . . . and . . . . 1814.

---

* The Napoleonic threat of invasion.—Ed.

Among his fellows, while an ample map
Before their eyes lay carefully outspread,
From which the gallant teacher would discourse,
Now pointing this way, and now that.—'Here flows,'
Thus would he say, 'The Rhine, that famous stream!
'Eastward, the Danube toward[1] this inland sea,
'A mightier river, winds from realm to realm;
'And, like a serpent, shows his glittering back
'Bespotted—with innumerable isles:
'Here reigns the Russian, there the Turk; observe
'His capital city!' Thence, along a tract
Of livelier interest to his hopes and fears,
His finger moved, distinguishing the spots
Where wide-spread conflict then most fiercely raged;
Nor left unstigmatized those fatal fields
On which the sons of mighty Germany
Were taught a base submission.—'Here behold
'A nobler race, the Switzers, and their land,
'Vales deeper far than these of ours, huge woods,
'And mountains white with everlasting snow!'
—And, surely, he, that spake with kindling brow,
Was a true patriot, hopeful as the best
Of that young peasantry, who, in our days,
Have fought and perished for Helvetia's rights—
Ah, not in vain!—or those who, in old time,
For work of happier issue, to the side
Of Tell came trooping from a thousand huts,
When he had risen alone! * No braver Youth

[1] 1827.
. . . . tow'rds . . . 1814.

* Dr. John Davy, the editor of his brother Sir Humphry Davy's *Fragmentary Remains*, was of opinion (see p. 110) that "in describing the high qualities, intellectual and moral, of the young soldier, the poet has in his mind the memory of the man whose name was so properly associated with the company,—idealising according to his wont,—selecting such qualities as suited his purpose." He refers to Mr. Wedgwood, the founder of this volunteer corps.—ED.

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Descended from Judean[1] heights, to march
With righteous Joshua;* nor[2] appeared in arms
When grove was felled, and altar was cast down,
And Gideon blew the trumpet, soul-inflamed,
And strong in hatred of idolatry."

The Pastor, even as if by these last words
Raised from his seat within the chosen shade,
Moved towards the grave;—instinctively his steps
We followed; and my voice with joy exclaimed:[3]
"Power to the Oppressors of the world is given,
A might of which they dream not. Oh! the curse,
To be the awakener of divinest thoughts,
Father and founder of exalted deeds;
And, to whole nations bound in servile straits,
The liberal donor of capacities
More than heroic! this to be, nor yet
Have sense of one connatural wish, nor yet
Deserve the least return of human thanks;
Winning no recompense but deadly hate
With pity mixed, astonishment with scorn!"

When this involuntary strain had ceased,[4]
The Pastor said: "So Providence is served;
The forkèd weapon of the skies can send

---

1 1827.
. . . Judea's . . . . . 1814.

2 1836.
. . . . . or . . . 1814.

3 1836.
This spoken, from his seat the Pastor rose,
And moved towards the grave;—instinctively
His steps we followed; and my voice exclaimed, 1814.

4 1836.
When these involuntary words had ceased, 1814.

---

* Compare the Book of *Joshua*, *passim*; Josephus, *Ant.* v. 1. Also, *Judges* vii.; and Josephus, *Ant.* v. 6.—Ed.

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Illumination into deep, dark holds,
Which the mild sunbeam hath not power to pierce.
Ye Thrones that have defied remorse, and cast
Pity away, soon shall ye quake with *fear!*[1]
For, not unconscious of the mighty debt
Which to outrageous wrong the sufferer owes,
Europe, through all her habitable bounds,[2]
Is thirsting for *their* overthrow, who yet
Survive, as pagan temples stood of yore,
By horror of their impious rites, preserved;
Are still permitted to extend their pride,[3]
Like cedars on the top of Lebanon
Darkening the sun.
"But less impatient thoughts,
And love 'all hoping and expecting all,' *
This hallowed grave demands, where rests in peace
A humble champion of the better cause;
A Peasant-youth, so call him, for he asked
No higher name; in whom our country showed,
As in a favourite son, most beautiful.
In spite of vice, and misery, and disease,
Spread with the spreading of her wealthy arts,
England, the ancient and the free, appeared
In him to stand before my swimming eyes,
Unconquerably virtuous and secure.

---

[1] 1836.

. . . . . . power to pierce.
Why do ye quake, intimidated Thrones? 1814.

[2] 1836.

. . . . Seats, 1814.

[3] 1836.

. . . . who still
Exist, as Pagan Temples stood of old,
By very horror of their impious rites
Preserved; are suffered to extend their pride, 1814.

---

* Is it a reference to the Pauline description of Charity (1 Cor. xiii. 7), "Charity . . . hopeth all things, endureth all things"?—Ed.

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—No more of this, lest I offend his dust:
Short was his life, and a brief tale remains.

"One day—a summer's day of annual pomp[1]
And solemn chase—from morn to sultry noon
His steps had followed, fleetest of the fleet,
The red-deer driven along its native heights
With cry of hound and horn; and, from that toil
Returned with sinews weakened and relaxed,
This generous Youth, too negligent of self,
Plunged—'mid a gay and busy throng convened
To wash the fleeces of his Father's flock—
Into the chilling flood. Convulsions dire[2]
Seized him, that self-same night; and through the space
Of twelve ensuing days his frame was wrenched,
Till nature rested from her work in death.
To him, thus snatched away, his comrades paid
A soldier's honours. At his funeral hour
Bright was the sun, the sky a cloudless blue—
A golden lustre slept upon the hills;
And if by chance a stranger, wandering there,
From some commanding eminence had looked
Down on this spot, well pleased would he have seen
A glittering spectacle; but every face
Was pallid: seldom hath that eye been moist
With tears, that wept not then; nor were the few,
Who from their dwellings came not forth to join
In this sad service, less disturbed than we.
They started at the tributary peal

[1] 1845.
One summer's day, a day of annual pomp 1814.

[2] 1827.
. . . . too negligent of self,
(A natural failing which maturer years
Would have subdued) took fearlessly—and kept—
His wonted station in the chilling flood,
Among a busy company convened
To wash his Father's flock. Convulsions dire 1814.

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Of instantaneous thunder, which announced,
Through the still air, the closing of the Grave;
And distant mountains echoed with a sound
Of lamentation, never heard before!"

The Pastor ceased.—My venerable Friend
Victoriously upraised his clear bright eye;
And, when that eulogy was ended, stood
Enrapt, as if his inward sense perceived
The prolongation of some still response,
Sent by the ancient Soul of this wide land,
The Spirit of its mountains and its seas,
Its cities, temples, fields, its awful power,
Its rights and virtues—by that Deity
Descending, and supporting his pure heart
With patriotic confidence and joy.
And, at the last of those memorial words,
The pining Solitary turned aside;
Whether through manly instinct to conceal
Tender emotions spreading from the heart
To his worn cheek; or with uneasy shame
For those cold humours of habitual spleen
That,[1] fondly seeking in dispraise of man
Solace and self-excuse, had sometimes urged
To self-abuse a not ineloquent tongue.
—Right toward[2] the sacred Edifice his steps
Had been directed; and we saw him now
Intent upon a monumental stone,
Whose uncouth form was grafted on the wall,
Or rather seemed to have grown into the side
Of the rude pile; as oft-times trunks of trees,
Where nature works in wild and craggy spots,
Are seen incorporate with the living rock—

[1] 1827.
Which, ... 1814.

[2] 1827.
. tow'rds . . . . 1814.

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To endure for aye. The Vicar, taking note
Of his employment, with a courteous smile
Exclaimed—
"The sagest Antiquarian's eye
That task would foil;" then, letting fall his voice
While he advanced, thus spake: "Tradition tells[1]
That, in Eliza's golden days,* a Knight
Came on a war-horse † sumptuously attired,
And fixed his home in this sequestered vale.
'Tis left untold if here he first drew breath,
Or as a stranger reached this deep recess,
Unknowing and unknown. A pleasing thought
I sometimes entertain, that haply bound
To Scotland's court in service of his Queen,
Or sent on mission to some northern Chief
Of England's realm, this vale he might have seen
With transient observation; and thence caught
An image fair, which, brightening in his soul
When joy of war and pride of chivalry
Languished beneath accumulated years,[2]
Had power to draw him from the world, resolved
To make that paradise his chosen home
To which his peaceful fancy oft had turned.

"Vague thoughts are these; but, if belief may rest
Upon unwritten story fondly traced

---

[1] 1827.

That task would foil." And, with these added words,
He thitherward advanced, "Tradition tells 1814.

[2] 1827.

. . . . . . in his soul
When years admonished him of failing strength
And he no more rejoiced in war's delights, 1814.

Long crush'd beneath . . . . MS.

---

* Compare *The White Doe of Rylstone*, canto i. l. 42 (vol. iv. p. 107)—
In great Eliza's golden time. ED.

† See the Fenwick note, p. 13.—ED.

From sire to son, in this obscure retreat
The Knight arrived, with spear and shield, and borne
Upon a Charger gorgeously bedecked
With broidered housings.[1] And the lofty Steed—*
His sole companion, and his faithful friend,
Whom he, in gratitude, let loose to range
In fertile pastures—was beheld with eyes
Of admiration and delightful awe,
By those untravelled Dalesmen. With less pride,
Yet free from touch of envious discontent,
They saw a mansion at his bidding rise,
Like a bright star, amid the lowly band
Of their rude homesteads. Here the Warrior dwelt;
And, in that mansion, children of his own,
Or kindred, gathered round him. As a tree
That falls and disappears, the house is gone; †
And, through improvidence or want of love
For ancient worth and honourable things,
The spear and shield are vanished, which the Knight
Hung in his rustic hall. One ivied arch
Myself have seen, a gateway,† last remains
Of that foundation in domestic care
Raised by his hands. And now no trace is left
Of the mild-hearted Champion, save this stone,
Faithless memorial! and his family name
Borne by yon clustering cottages, that sprang
From out the ruins of his stately lodge:
These, and the name and title at full length,—

---

[1] 1845.
The Knight arrived, with pomp of spear and shield,
And borne upon a Charger covered o'er
With gilded housings. . . . . 1814.

---

* See Spenser's *Faërie Queene*, part 1, canto viii. stanza 2.—Ed.

† "The pillars of the gateway in front of the mansion remained when we first took up our abode at Grasmere. Two or three cottages still remain which are called Nott Houses, from the name of the gentleman (I have called him a knight) concerning whom these traditions survive. He was the ancestor of the Knott family, formerly considerable proprietors in the district."—I. F.

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Sir Alfred Irthing, with appropriate words
Accompanied, still extant, in a wreath
Or posy, girding round the several fronts
Of three clear-sounding and harmonious bells,
That in the steeple hang, his pious gift." *

"So fails, so languishes, grows dim, and dies,"
The grey-haired Wanderer pensively exclaimed,
"All that this world is proud of. From their spheres
The stars of human glory are cast down;
Perish the roses and the flowers of kings,†
Princes, and emperors, and the crowns and palms
Of all the mighty, withered and consumed!
Nor is power given to lowliest innocence
Long to protect her own. The man himself
Departs; and soon is spent the line of those

---

* It is clear from the Fenwick note (see p. 13) that the title, "Sir Alfred Irthing," was Wordsworth's invention. I am indebted to the Rector of Grasmere—the Rev. Henry M. Fletcher—for the following information as to the bells of the church, and to the "Nott house":—

"Three bells hang in the tower. That they are 'clear-sounding and harmonious' I think may be said of them without poetical license. They have not on them the name and title of their donor. Two of them have coats of arms. My son believes that the quarterings show that they were the gifts of the Flemings of Rydal Hall, patrons, for some hundred years, of the living. The third, and smallest, reports of itself that it was recast at the expense of Mrs. Dorothy Knott, in the year 1808, and that Thomas Mears of London did the work. This last inscription is partly in Latin. The two older bells have on them the inscriptions respectively of 'Soli Deo' and 'Gloria in altissimis Deo.'

"Looking over the old book of Church Warden's accounts, I observe that, in the year 1732, there is an item

'Towards casting the bells, and other charges, £40, 3s. 9d.,'

and in the following year, 1733, again

'Towards casting the bells, and other charges, £49, 0s. 3d.'

This, at a time when the whole of the general charge yearly ranged from £2 to £5. It was a *re*-casting, I presume.

"The 'Nott house' still exists, and is the residence of our chief 'statesman,' James Fleming. It is known as 'Knott's Houses.' In the dialect of this county, when purely used, there is no possessive 's. Mr. Fletcher's letters being always, *e.g.*, spoken of at the post-office here as 'Mr. Fletcher letters.' 'Nott house,' therefore, meant a house belonging to Mrs. Dorothy Knott, or her husband's forefathers. A little group of houses has formed round it; but the old Farm House, I make little doubt, is the one for which you ask."

See also Charles Lamb's remarks in his third letter to Wordsworth about *The Excursion*, written in 1814.

† See Wordsworth's note, p. 389.—Ed.

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Who, in the bodily image, in the mind,
In heart or soul, in station or pursuit,
Did most resemble him. Degrees and ranks,
Fraternities and orders—heaping high
New wealth upon the burthen of the old,
And placing trust in privilege confirmed
And re-confirmed—are scoffed at with a smile
Of greedy foretaste, from the secret stand
Of Desolation, aimed: to slow decline
These yield, and these to sudden overthrow:
Their virtue, service, happiness, and state
Expire; and nature's pleasant robe of green,
Humanity's appointed shroud, enwraps
Their monuments and their memory. The vast Frame
Of social nature changes evermore
Her organs and her members with decay
Restless, and restless generation, powers
And functions dying and produced at need,—
And by this law the mighty whole subsists:
With an ascent and progress in the main;
Yet, oh! how disproportioned to the hopes
And expectations of self-flattering minds!

"The courteous Knight, whose bones are here interred,
Lived in an age conspicuous as our own
For strife and ferment in the minds of men;
Whence alteration in the forms of things,
Various and vast. A memorable age!
Which did to him assign a pensive lot—
To linger 'mid the last of those bright clouds
That, on the steady breeze of honour, sailed
In long procession calm and beautiful.
He who had seen his own bright order fade,
And its devotion gradually decline,
(While war, relinquishing the lance and shield,
Her temper changed, and bowed to other laws)
Had also witnessed, in his morn of life,

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That violent commotion, which o'erthrew,
In town and city and sequestered glen,
Altar, and cross, and church of solemn roof,
And old religious house—pile after pile;
And shook their[1] tenants out into the fields,
Like wild beasts without home! Their hour was come;
But why no softening thought of gratitude,
No just remembrance, scruple, or wise doubt?
Benevolence is mild; nor borrows help,
Save at worst need, from bold impetuous force,
Fitliest allied to anger and revenge.
But Human-kind rejoices in the might
Of mutability; and airy hopes,
Dancing around her, hinder and disturb
Those meditations of the soul that[2] feed
The retrospective virtues. Festive songs
Break from the maddened nations at the sight
Of sudden overthrow; and cold neglect
Is the sure consequence of slow decay.

"Even," said the Wanderer, "as that courteous Knight,
Bound by his vow to labour for redress
Of all who suffer wrong, and to enact
By sword and lance the law of gentleness,
(If I may venture of myself to speak,
Trusting that not incongruously I blend
Low things with lofty) I too shall be doomed
To outlive the kindly use and fair esteem
Of the poor calling which my youth embraced
With no unworthy prospect. But enough;
—Thoughts crowd upon me—and 'twere seemlier now
To stop, and yield our gracious Teacher thanks
For the pathetic records which his voice

---

1 1836.
. . the . . . . 1814.

2 1827.
. . . . which . 1814.

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Hath here delivered; words of heartfelt truth,
Tending to patience when affliction strikes;
To hope and love; to confident repose
In God; and reverence for the dust of Man."

Book Eighth

THE PARSONAGE

ARGUMENT

Pastor's apology and apprehensions[1] *that he might have detained his Auditors too long, with the Pastor's invitation to his house*[2]*—Solitary disinclined to comply—rallies the Wanderer—and playfully*[3] *draws a comparison between his itinerant profession and that of the Knight-errant—which leads to Wanderer's giving an account of changes in the Country from the manufacturing spirit—Favourable effects—The other side of the picture, and chiefly as it has affected the humbler classes—Wanderer asserts the hollowness of all national grandeur if unsupported by moral worth*[4]*—Physical science unable to support itself—Lamentations over an excess of manufacturing industry among the humbler Classes of Society—Picture of a Child employed in a Cotton-mill—Ignorance and degradation of Children among the agricultural Population reviewed—Conversation broken off by a renewed Invitation from the Pastor—Path leading to his House—Its appearance described—His Daughter—His Wife—His Son (a Boy) enters with his Companion—Their happy appearance—The Wanderer how affected by the sight of them.*

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[1] 1836.
Pastor's apprehensions 1814.

[2] 1836.
too long—Invitation to his House— 1814.

[3] 1836.
and somewhat playfully 1814.

[4] 1836.
by moral worth—gives Instances— 1814.

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THE pensive Sceptic of the lonely vale
To those acknowledgments subscribed his own,
With a sedate compliance, which the Priest
Failed not to notice, inly pleased, and said:—
"If ye, by whom invited I began
These narratives[1] of calm and humble life,
Be satisfied, 'tis well,—the end is gained;
And in return for sympathy bestowed
And patient listening, thanks accept from me.
—Life, death, eternity! momentous themes
Are they[2]—and might demand a seraph's tongue,
Were they not equal to their own support;
And therefore no incompetence of mine
Could do them wrong. The universal forms
Of human nature, in a spot like this,
Present themselves at once to all men's view:
Ye wished for act and circumstance, that make
The individual known and understood;
And such as my best judgment could select
From what the place afforded, have been given;
Though apprehensions crossed me that my zeal
To his might well be likened, who unlocks
A cabinet stored with gems and pictures—draws
His treasures forth, soliciting regard[3]
To this, and this, as worthier than the last,

[1] 1836.
. . . . I commenced
Those Narratives . . . . . . 1814.
These . . . . 1827.

[2] 1827.
Are these— . . . . . . 1814.

[3] 1836.
Though apprehensions crossed me, in the course
Of this self-pleasing exercise, that Ye
My zeal to his would liken, who, possessed
Of some rare gems, or pictures finely wrought,
Unlocks his Cabinet, and draws them forth
One after one,—soliciting regard 1814.
My zeal to his would liken, who unlocks

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Till the spectator, who awhile was pleased
More than the exhibitor himself, becomes
Weary and faint, and longs to be released.
—But let us hence! my dwelling is in sight,
And there—"
At this the Solitary shrunk
With backward will; but, wanting not address
That inward motion to disguise, he said
To his Compatriot, smiling as he spake;
—"The peaceable remains of this good Knight
Would be disturbed, I fear, with wrathful scorn,
If consciousness could reach him where he lies
That one, albeit of these degenerate times,
Deploring changes past, or dreading change
Foreseen, had dared to couple, even in thought,
The fine vocation of the sword and lance
With the gross aims and body-bending toil
Of a poor brotherhood who walk the earth
Pitied, and, where they are not known, despised.

"Yet, by the good Knight's leave, the two estates
Are graced with some resemblance. Errant those,
Exiles and wanderers—and the like are these;
Who, with their burthen, traverse hill and dale,
Carrying relief for nature's simple wants.
—What though no higher recompense be sought [1]
Than honest maintenance, by irksome toil
Full oft procured, yet may they [2] claim respect,

A Cabinet with gems or pictures stored,
And draws them forth—soliciting regard 1827.

Though apprehensions crossed me that my zeal
To his might well be likened, who unlocks
A Cabinet with gems or pictures stored,
And draws them forth—soliciting regard 1832.

[1] 1836.
. . . . . . they seek 1814.

[2] 1836.
. . procured! Yet Such may . . 1814.

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Among the intelligent, for what this course
Enables them to be and to perform.
Their tardy steps give leisure to observe,
While solitude permits the mind to feel;
Instructs, and prompts her[1] to supply defects
By the division of her inward self
For grateful converse: and to these poor men
Nature (I but repeat your favourite boast)
Is bountiful—go wheresoe'er they may;[2]
Kind nature's various wealth is all their own.
Versed in the characters of men; and bound,
By ties[3] of daily interest, to maintain
Conciliatory manners and smooth speech;
Such have been, and still are in their degree,
Examples efficacious to refine
Rude intercourse; apt agents to expel,[4]
By importation of unlooked-for arts,
Barbarian torpor, and blind prejudice;
Raising, through just gradation, savage life
To rustic, and the rustic to urbane.
—Within their moving magazines is lodged
Power that comes forth to quicken and exalt
Affections[5] seated in the mother's breast,
And in the lover's fancy; and to feed
The sober sympathies of long-tried friends.
—By these Itinerants, as experienced men,
Counsel is given; contention they appease

---

[1] 1827.
And doth instruct her . . . . 1814.

[2] 1836.
(As I have heard you boast with honest pride)
Nature is bountiful, where'er they go; 1814.

[3] 1832.
By tie . . . . 1814.

[4] 1827.
. . . . . . Instruments to excite, 1814.

[5] 1827.
The affections . . . . . 1814.

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With gentle language; in remotest wilds,[1]
Tears wipe away, and pleasant tidings bring;
Could the proud quest of chivalry do more?"

"Happy," rejoined the Wanderer, "they who gain
A panegyric from your generous tongue!
But, if to these Wayfarers once pertained
Aught of romantic interest, it is gone.[2]
Their purer service, in this realm at least,
Is past for ever.—An inventive Age
Has wrought, if not with speed of magic, yet
To most strange issues. I have lived to mark
A new and unforeseen creation rise
From out the labours of a peaceful Land
Wielding her potent enginery to frame
And to produce, with appetite as keen
As that of war, which rests not night or day,
Industrious to destroy! * With fruitless pains
Might one like me *now* visit many a tract
Which, in his youth, he trod, and trod again,
A lone pedestrian with a scanty freight,†
Wished-for, or welcome, wheresoe'er he came—

[1] 1827.
With healing words; and in remotest Wilds 1814.

[2] 1836.
. . . . 'tis gone. 1814.

* "What follows in the discourse of the Wanderer, upon the changes he had witnessed in rural life by the introduction of machinery, is truly described from what I myself saw during my boyhood and early youth, and from what was often told me by persons of this humble calling. Happily, most happily, for these mountains, the mischief was diverted from the banks of their beautiful streams, and transferred to open and flat counties abounding in coal, where the agency of steam was found much more effectual for carrying on those demoralising works. Had it not been for this invention, long before the present time, every torrent and river in this district would have had its factory, large and populous in proportion to the power of the water that could there be commanded. Parliament has interfered to prevent the night-work which was carried on in these mills as actively as during the day-time, and by necessity, still more perniciously; a sad disgrace to the proprietors and to the nation which could so long tolerate such unnatural proceedings."—I. F.

† In 1788, and again in 1794, Wordsworth visited Westmoreland and Cumberland as a pedestrian. Compare the sixth book of *The Prelude*, entitled "Cambridge and the Alps" (vol. iii. p. 228).—Ed.

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Among the tenantry of thorpe and vill; *
Or straggling burgh, of ancient charter proud,
And dignified by battlements and towers
Of some stern castle, mouldering on the brow
Of a green hill or bank of rugged stream. †
The foot-path faintly marked, the horse-track wild,
And formidable length of plashy lane,
(Prized avenues ere others had been shaped
Or easier links connecting place with place)
Have vanished—swallowed up by stately roads
Easy and bold, that penetrate the gloom
Of Britain's [1] farthest glens. The Earth has lent
Her waters, Air her breezes; ‡ and the sail
Of traffic glides with ceaseless intercourse,[2] §
Glistening along the low and woody dale;
Or, in its progress, on the lofty side,
Of some bare hill, with wonder kenned from far.[3] ||

[1] 1827.
Of England's . . . . . . 1814.

[2] 1836.
. . . . . . interchange, 1814.

[3] 1836.
. . . . . . woody dale,
Or on the naked mountain's lofty side. 1814.

* Thorpe; Anglo-Saxon *Thorp*, a homestead, or hamlet; allied to *turba*, a crowd (as of houses). Vill; a little village or farm. Lat. *villa*, dimin. of *vicus*.—Ed.

† Evidently a reminiscence of Penrith, a "straggling burgh, of ancient charter proud," with its castle on "the brow of a green hill," and with Brougham Castle close at hand, on "bank of rugged stream." See *The Prelude* (vol. iii. p. 229), and compare Gray's Journal.—Ed.

‡ See Wordsworth's note, p. 390.—Ed.

§ Mr. Rawnsley has suggested that this may refer to the introduction of canal boats into England. It is more likely, I think, that Wordsworth had in his mind's eye

That animating spectacle of sails
That, through her inland regions, to and fro
Pass with the respirations of the tide,
Perpetual, multitudinous!

referred to in pp. 332-33, a reminiscence perhaps of what he had often seen in the Bristol Channel.—Ed.

|| See last note. The phrase "*on* the lofty side of some bare hill," occasions some difficulty; and, taken in connection with the previous clause, "air has lent her breezes," suggests the idea of a windmill, seen in its slow

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"Meanwhile, at social Industry's command,
How quick, how vast an increase! From the germ
Of some poor hamlet, rapidly produced
Here a huge town, continuous and compact,
Hiding the face of earth for leagues—and there,
Where not a habitation stood before,
Abodes[1] of men irregularly massed
Like trees in forests,—spread through spacious tracts,
O'er which the smoke of unremitting fires
Hangs permanent,* and plentiful as wreaths
Of vapour glittering in the morning sun.
And, wheresoe'er the traveller turns his steps,
He sees the barren wilderness erased,
Or disappearing; triumph that proclaims
How much the mild Directress of the plough
Owes to alliance with these new-born arts!
—Hence is the wide sea peopled,—hence[2] the shores
Of Britain are resorted to by ships
Freighted from every climate of the world
With the world's choicest produce. Hence that sum
Of keels that rest within her crowded ports,
Or ride at anchor in her sounds and bays;
That animating spectacle of sails
That,[3] through her inland regions, to and fro
Pass with the respirations of the tide,

[1] 1827.
The abodes . . . . 1814.

[2] 1827.
. . . . . . and . . . 1814.

[3] 1836.
Which . . . . 1814.

movement, far off on a bare hill-side. But I rather think it is the progress of the "sails of traffic" on the waters of an inland tidal channel that is still referred to; the masts and sails of the vessels being seen moving onwards, while the water itself is hidden, and the spectacle is therefore by the rustic eye, "with wonder kenned from far." I would be disposed to think that there was a misprint here, and that we should read "*from* the lofty side" instead of "on," did the latter reading not occur in the edition of 1814, as well as in 1836, and all the subsequent editions.—Ed.

* Birmingham, Leeds, Sheffield.—Ed.

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Perpetual, multitudinous! Finally,
Hence a dread arm of floating power, a voice
Of thunder daunting those who would approach
With hostile purposes the blessed Isle,
Truth's consecrated residence, the seat
Impregnable of Liberty and Peace.

"And yet, O happy Pastor of a flock
Faithfully watched, and, by that loving care
And Heaven's good providence, preserved from taint!
With you I grieve, when on the darker side
Of this great change I look; and there behold
Such outrage[1] done to nature as compels
The indignant power to justify herself;
Yea, to avenge her violated rights,
For England's bane.—When soothing darkness spreads
O'er hill and vale," the Wanderer thus expressed
His recollections, "and the punctual stars,
While all things else are gathering to their homes,
Advance, and in the firmament of heaven
Glitter—but undisturbing, undisturbed;
As if their silent company were charged
With peaceful admonitions for the heart
Of all-beholding Man, earth's thoughtful lord;
Then, in full many a region, once like this
The assured domain of calm simplicity
And pensive quiet, an unnatural light
Prepared for never-resting Labour's eyes
Breaks from a many-windowed fabric huge; *
And at the appointed hour a bell is heard,
Of harsher import than the curfew-knoll

---

[1] 1827.

. . . . . . and there behold,
Through strong temptation of those gainful Arts,
Such outrage . . . . 1814.

---

* See the Fenwick note, p. 330.—Ed.

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That spake the Norman Conqueror's stern behest—*
A local summons to unceasing toil!
Disgorged are now the ministers of day;
And, as they issue from the illumined pile,
A fresh band meets them, at the crowded door—
And in the courts—and where the rumbling stream,
That turns the multitude of dizzy wheels,†
Glares, like a troubled spirit, in its bed
Among the rocks below. Men, maidens, youths,
Mother and little children, boys and girls,
Enter, and each the wonted task resumes
Within this temple, where is offered up
To Gain, the master idol of the realm,
Perpetual sacrifice. Even thus of old
Our ancestors, within the still domain
Of vast cathedral or conventual church,
Their vigils kept; where tapers day and night
On the dim altar burned continually,
In token that the House was evermore
Watching to God. Religious men were they;
Nor would their reason, tutored to aspire
Above this transitory world, allow
That there should pass a moment of the year,[1]
When in their land the Almighty's service ceased.

"Triumph who will in these profaner rites
Which we, a generation self-extolled,
As zealously perform! I cannot share
His proud complacency:—yet do I exult,[2]

[1] 1814.
A single moment through the year should pass C.
That even a moment of the year should pass C.

[2] 1836.
. . . . yet I exult, 1814.

* The curfew-bell, introduced into England by William of Normandy, in 1068.—Ed.
† Compare Mrs. Browning's *Cry of the Children*, stanza vii.—Ed.

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Casting reserve away, exult to see
An intellectual mastery exercised
O'er the blind elements; a purpose given,
A perseverance fed; almost a soul
Imparted—to brute matter. I rejoice,
Measuring the force of those gigantic powers
That,[1] by the thinking mind, have been compelled
To serve the will of feeble-bodied Man.
For with the sense of admiration blends
The animating hope that time may come
When, strengthened, yet not dazzled, by the might
Of this dominion over nature gained,
Men of all lands shall exercise the same
In due proportion to their country's need;
Learning, though late, that all true glory rests,
All praise, all safety, and all happiness,
Upon the moral law. Egyptian Thebes,
Tyre, by the margin of the sounding waves,
Palmyra, central in the desert, fell;
And the Arts died by which they had been raised.*
—Call Archimedes from his buried tomb

[1] 1827.
Which . . . . 1814.

* The foundation of Thebes was ascribed to the mythical Manes. The ground on which it stood was large enough to contain a city equal in extent with ancient Rome, or modern Paris; . . . an immense area was covered with Temples, and their avenues of Sphinxes. (Cf. Diodorus, i. 40, 50. Strabo, xvii. pp. 805, 815 fol., and Smith's *Dictionary of Ancient Geography*.) *Tyre*, in Phœnicia, was built partly on an island and partly on the mainland. The island city "must have arisen in the period between Nebuchadnezzar and Alexander the Great." . . . "The western side of the island is now submerged, to the extent of more than a mile; and that this was once occupied by the city is shewn by the bases of columns which may still be discerned. Benjamin of Tudela mentions that, in the end of the twelfth century, towns, markets, streets, and halls might be observed at the bottom of the sea." (Smith's *Dict. of Ancient Geography*.) Palmyra, or Tadmor, —the city of palms,—was enlarged, if not built, by Solomon in the tenth century B.C. It is situated in a well-watered oasis, in the great Syrian desert. It was an independent city under the first Roman Emperors, and is called a *colonia* on the coins of Caracalla. In 273 A.D. it had dwindled into an insignificant town. The ruins are inferior to those of Baalbec, but have a grandeur of their own. They are chiefly of the Corinthian order; although the most magnificent of them—*the Temple of the Sun*—is Ionic. —ED.

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Upon the grave[1] of vanished Syracuse,*
And feelingly the Sage shall make report
How insecure, how baseless in itself,
Is the Philosophy whose sway depends
On[2] mere material instruments;—how weak
Those arts, and high inventions, if unpropped
By virtue.—He, sighing with pensive grief,[3]
Amid his calm abstractions, would admit
That not the slender privilege is theirs
To save themselves from blank forgetfulness!"

When from the Wanderer's lips these words had fallen,

---

[1] 1836.
Upon the plain . . . . . . 1814.

[2] 1827.
Is that Philosophy, whose sway is framed
For . . . . 1814.

Is the Philosophy, that only rules
Over . . . . MS.

[3] 1845.
. . He with sighs of pensive grief, 1814.

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* I am indebted to the Rev. H. G. Woods, President of Trinity College, Oxford, for the following note on the tomb of Archimedes:—

"The tomb now shown at Syracuse as that of Archimedes corresponds pretty well in point of situation with Cicero's description ('Tusculan Disputations,' v. 23). It is a little distance to the west of the wall of Achradina, on the left of the road which mounts the slope of Epipolæ. I unfortunately cannot remember whether there were any traces of the sphere and cylinder inscribed on it, which Cicero mentions as there when he excavated it; but my impression at the time was, that its identity rested simply on a Ciceronic tradition, and that it was hardly more genuine than Virgil's tomb at Naples. The tomb itself resembled a number of other tombs near—among them, the reputed tomb of Timoleon, which is close by (Cicero speaks of the number of tombs in that spot). But, whatever the value of the identifying tradition, there can be no doubt that Wordsworth, in these lines, has thoroughly reproduced the local colour of the surroundings. As one mounts the road I mentioned, past the tomb of Archimedes, and gets the view over Achradina—once so populous, and now a waste area covered with grey rocks and grass, save where, here and there, it is converted by irrigation into fertile gardens and fields—one has strongly brought before him how completely Syracuse has 'vanished.' The modern city is entirely confined within the limits of Ortygia, and the general impression that one gets of Achradina is that it is the graveyard of the old city. I remember that this feeling came over me very strongly at the time, but it was certainly not suggested by Wordsworth's lines, which I did not remember."—Ed.

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I said, "And, did in truth those vaunted Arts[1]
Possess such privilege, how could we escape
Sadness and keen regret, we who revere,[2]
And would preserve as things above all price,
The old domestic morals of the land,
Her simple manners, and the stable worth
That dignified and cheered a low estate?
Oh! where is now the character of peace,
Sobriety, and order, and chaste love,
And honest dealing, and untainted speech,
And pure good-will, and hospitable cheer;
That made the very thought of country-life
A thought of refuge, for a mind detained
Reluctantly amid the bustling crowd?
Where now the beauty of the sabbath kept
With conscientious reverence, as a day
By the almighty Lawgiver pronounced
Holy and blest? and where the winning grace
Of all the lighter ornaments attached
To time and season, as the year rolled round?"

"Fled!" was the Wanderer's passionate response,
"Fled utterly! or only to be traced
In a few fortunate retreats like this;
Which I behold with trembling, when I think
What lamentable change, a year—a month—
May bring; that brook converting as it runs
Into an instrument of deadly bane
For those, who, yet untempted to forsake
The simple occupations of their sires,
Drink the pure water of its innocent stream
With lip almost as pure.—Domestic bliss
(Or call it comfort, by a humbler name,)
How art thou blighted for the poor Man's heart!

[1] 1836.
. . . . . . these vaunted Arts 1814.

[2] 1836.
Regret and painful sadness, who revere, 1814.

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Lo! in such neighbourhood, from morn to eve,
The habitations empty! or perchance
The Mother left alone,—no helping hand
To rock the cradle of her peevish babe;
No daughters round her, busy at the wheel,
Or in dispatch of each day's little growth
Of household occupation; no nice arts
Of needle-work; no bustle at the fire,
Where once the dinner was prepared with pride;
Nothing to speed the day, or cheer the mind;
Nothing to praise, to teach, or to command!

"The Father, if perchance he still retain
His old employments, goes to field or wood,
No longer led or followed by the[1] Sons;
Idlers perchance they were,—but in *his* sight;
Breathing fresh air, and treading the green earth;
'Till their short holiday of childhood ceased,
Ne'er to return! That birthright now is lost.
Economists will tell you that the State
Thrives by the forfeiture—unfeeling thought,
And false as monstrous! Can the mother thrive
By the destruction of her innocent sons
In whom a premature necessity
Blocks out the forms of nature, preconsumes
The reason, famishes the heart, shuts up
The infant Being in itself, and makes
Its very spring a season of decay!
The lot is wretched, the condition sad,
Whether a pining discontent survive,
And thirst for change; or habit hath subdued
The soul deprest, dejected—even to love
Of her close tasks, and long captivity.[2]

---

[1] 1820.
. . . . his . 1814.

[2] 1836.
Of her dull tasks, and close captivity. 1814.

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Oh, banish far such wisdom as condemns
A native Briton to these inward chains,
Fixed in his soul, so early and so deep;
Without his own consent, or knowledge, fixed!
He is a slave to whom release comes not,
And cannot come. The boy, where'er he turns,
Is still a prisoner; when the wind is up
Among the clouds, and roars through the ancient woods;[1]
Or when the sun is shining in the east,[2]
Quiet and calm. Behold him—in the school
Of his attainments? no; but with the air
Fanning his temples under heaven's blue arch.
His raiment, whitened o'er with cotton-flakes
Or locks of wool, announces whence he comes.
Creeping his gait and cowering, his lip pale,
His respiration quick and audible;
And scarcely could you fancy that a gleam
Could break from out those languid eyes, or a blush[3]
Mantle upon his cheek. Is this the form,
Is that the countenance, and such the port,
Of no mean Being? One who should be clothed
With dignity befitting his proud hope;
Who, in his very childhood, should appear
Sublime from present purity and joy!
The limbs increase; but liberty of mind
Is gone for ever; and this organic frame,
So joyful in its motions, is become[4]

---

[1] 1836.
. . . . and in the ancient woods; 1814.

[2] 1827.
. . . . is rising in the heavens, 1814.

[3] 1836.
From out those languid eyes could break, or blush 1814.

[4] 1845.
Thus gone for ever, this organic Frame,
Which from heaven's bounty we receive, instinct
With light, and gladsome motions, soon becomes 1814.

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Dull, to the joy of her own motions dead;
And even the touch, so exquisitely poured
Through the whole body, with a languid will
Performs its[1] functions; rarely competent
To impress a vivid feeling on the mind
Of what there is delightful in the breeze,
The gentle visitations of the sun,
Or lapse of liquid element—by hand,
Or foot, or lip, in summer's warmth—perceived.
—Can hope look forward to a manhood raised
On such foundations?"
"Hope is none for him!"
The pale Recluse indignantly exclaimed,
"And tens of thousands suffer wrong as deep.
Yet be it asked, in justice to our age,
If there were not, before those arts appeared,
These structures rose, commingling old and young,
And unripe sex with sex, for mutual taint;
If there were not, *then*,[2] in our far-famed Isle,
Multitudes, who from infancy had breathed
Air unimprisoned, and had lived at large;
Yet walked beneath the sun, in human shape,
As abject, as degraded? At this day,
Who shall enumerate the crazy huts
And tottering hovels, whence do issue forth
A ragged Offspring, with their upright hair[3]

Is gone for ever; this organic Frame,
So joyful in her motions, is become 1827.

The limbs increase; but this organic Frame,
So gladsome in its motions, is become 1836.

[1] 1814.
. . her . . . . 1827.
The text of 1836 returns to that of 1814.

[2] 1836.
Then, if there were not, ... 1814.

[3] 1836.
. . . with their own blanched hair 1814.

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Crowned like the image of fantastic Fear;
Or wearing, (shall we say?)[1] in that white growth
An ill-adjusted turban, for defence
Or fierceness, wreathed around their sun-burnt brows,
By savage Nature? Shrivelled are their lips;[2]
Naked, and coloured like the soil, the feet
On which they stand; as if thereby they drew
Some nourishment, as trees do by their roots,
From earth, the common mother of us all.
Figure and mien, complexion and attire,
Are leagued to strike dismay; but outstretched hand[3]
And whining voice denote them supplicants
For the least boon that pity can bestow.
Such on the breast of darksome heaths are found;
And with their parents occupy[4] the skirts
Of furze-clad commons; such are born and reared
At the mine's mouth under[5] impending rocks;
Or dwell in chambers of some natural cave;
Or[6] where their ancestors erected huts,
For the convenience of unlawful gain,
In forest purlieus; and the like are bred,

---

[1] 1836.
Or wearing, we might say, ... 1814.

[2] 1836.
By savage Nature's unassisted care. 1814.

[3] 1827.
Are framed to strike dismay, but the outstretched
hand 1814.

[4] 1836.
. . . . dwell upon . . 1814.

[5] 1836.
. . . . and are born and reared
At the mine's mouth, beneath . . . 1814.

. . . . such are born and reared
At the mine's mouth, beneath . . . 1827.

[6] 1836.
Or in the chambers of some natural cave;
And . . . . 1814.

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All England through, where nooks and slips of ground
Purloined, in times less jealous than our own,
From the green margin of the public way,
A residence afford them, 'mid the bloom
And gaiety of cultivated fields.
Such (we will hope the lowest in the scale)
Do I remember oft-times to have seen
'Mid Buxton's dreary heights.* In earnest watch,[1]
Till the swift vehicle approach, they stand;
Then, following closely with the cloud of dust,
An uncouth feat exhibit, and are gone
Heels over head, like tumblers on a stage.
—Up from the ground they snatch the copper coin,
And, on the freight of merry passengers
Fixing a steady eye, maintain their speed;
And spin—and pant—and overhead again,
Wild pursuivants! until their breath is lost,
Or bounty tires—and every face, that smiled
Encouragement, hath ceased to look that way.
—But, like the vagrants of the gipsy tribe,
These, bred to little pleasure in themselves,
Are profitless to others.

"Turn we then
To Britons born and bred within the pale
Of civil polity, and early trained
To earn, by wholesome labour in the field,
The bread they eat. A sample should I give
Of what this stock hath long produced to enrich
The tender age of life, ye would exclaim,[2]

---

[1] 1836.
. . . . . . Upon the watch, 1814.

[2] 1836.
Of what this stock produces to enrich
And beautify the tender age of life,
A sample fairly culled, ye would exclaim, 1814.

---

* The heights between Buxton and Macclesfield, at the top of the Valley of the Gite, near the Cat-and-Fiddle Inn.—Ed.

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'Is this the whistling plough-boy whose shrill notes
Impart new gladness to the morning air!'
Forgive me if I venture to suspect
That many, sweet to hear of in soft verse,
Are of no finer frame. Stiff are his joints;[1]
Beneath a cumbrous frock, that to the knees
Invests the thriving churl, his legs appear,
Fellows to those that[2] lustily upheld
The wooden stools for everlasting use,
Whereon[3] our fathers sate. And mark his brow!
Under whose shaggy canopy are set
Two eyes—not dim, but of a healthy[4] stare—
Wide, sluggish, blank, and ignorant, and strange—
Proclaiming boldly that they never drew
A look or motion of intelligence
From infant-conning of the Christ-cross-row,*

Of what this stock produces to enrich
The tender age of life, ye would exclaim, 1827.

[1] 1836.
. . . frame:—his joints are stiff; 1814.

[2] 1827.
. . . . . which . . . . . 1814.

[3] 1827.
On which . . . . 1814.

[4] 1814.
. . . . vacant . C.

---

* "The alphabet was called the Christ-cross-row, some say because a cross was prefixed to the alphabet in the old primers; but as probably from a superstitious custom of writing the alphabet in the form of a cross, by way of charm." (Archdeacon Nares's *Glossary*, Art. "Christ-cross-row.")

"The A B C horn-book, containing the alphabet and nine digits. The most ancient of these infant-school books had the letters arranged in the form of a Latin cross, with A at the top and Z at the bottom, but afterwards the letters were arranged in lines, and a + was placed at the beginning to remind the learner that 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.'

Mortals ne'er shall know
More than contain'd of old the Christ-cross Row.
Tickell, *The Horn-Book.*

(See Brewer's *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable.*)

At the beginning of a poem by the Rev. J. S. Hawker, called *A Christ-cross-Rhyme*, we find

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Or puzzling through a primer, line by line,
Till perfect mastery crown the pains at last.
—What kindly warmth from touch of fostering hand,
What penetrating power of sun or breeze,
Shall e'er dissolve the crust wherein his soul
Sleeps, like a caterpillar sheathed in ice?
This torpor is no pitiable work
Of modern ingenuity; no town
Nor crowded city can[1] be taxed with aught
Of sottish vice or desperate breach of law,
To which (and who can tell where or how soon?)
He may be roused. This Boy the fields produce:
His spade and hoe, mattock and glittering scythe,[2]
The carter's whip that[3] on his shoulder rests
In air high-towering with a boorish pomp,
The sceptre of his sway; his country's name,
Her equal rights, her churches and her schools—
What have they done for him? And, let me ask,
For tens of thousands uninformed as he?
In brief, what liberty of *mind*[4] is here?"

---

[1] 1836.
. . . may . . . . 1814.

[2] 1836.
To which in after years he may be rouzed.
—This Boy the Fields produce: his spade and hoe, 1814.

[3] 1827.
. . . which . . . . 1814.

[4] Italics were first used in 1836.

Christ, his cross, shall be my speed,
Teach me, father John, to read.

"The true use of the cross in drawing is to define or mark a point, especially a point to start or measure from. . . . But it was impossible that it could be used long without reference being supposed to be made to the cross of Christ, and it must soon have been regarded as invoking Christ's blessing upon the commencement of any writing."—W. W. Skeat in *Notes and Queries*, 3rd Series, XI. May 4, 1867.

And from the cross-row plucks the letter G.

Shakespeare, *Richard III.* act I. scene i. l. 55.—Ed.

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This ardent[1] sally pleased the mild good Man,
To whom the appeal couched in its[2] closing words
Was pointedly addressed; and to the thoughts
That,[3] in assent or opposition, rose
Within his mind, he seemed prepared to give
Prompt utterance; but the Vicar interposed[4]
With invitation urgently[5] renewed.
—We followed, taking as he led, a path
Along a hedge of hollies dark and tall,[6] *
Whose flexile boughs low bending with a weight[7]
Of leafy spray, concealed the stems and roots
That gave them nourishment. When frosty winds
Howl from the north, what kindly warmth, methought,
Is here—how grateful this impervious screen![8]

---

[1] 1827.
. cheerful . . . . . . 1814.

[2] 1827.
. . . . . those . . 1814.

[3] 1827.
Which, ... 1814.

[4] 1836.
Prompt utterance; but, rising from our seat,
The hospitable Vicar interposed 1814.

[5] 1827.
. . . . . earnestly . . 1814.

[6] 1827.
. . . of stately hollies framed, 1814.

[7] 1836.
Whose flexile boughs, descending with a weight 1814.

[8] 1827.
That gave them nourishment. How sweet methought,
When the fierce wind comes howling from the north,
How grateful, this impenetrable screen! 1814.

---

* The "hedge of hollies dark and tall," and the "pure cerulean gravel" on the walk between the "pastor's mansion" and the "house of prayer," are all due to the imagination of the poet. There is nothing now—either at Hackett or at the parsonage in Grasmere—at all corresponding to the details given in *The Excursion;* and it is not likely that the surroundings of either house in Wordsworth's time resembled the description given in the poem.—Ed.

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—Not shaped by simple wearing of the foot
On rural business passing to and fro
Was the commodious walk: a careful hand
Had marked the line, and strewn its [1] surface o'er
With pure cerulean gravel,* from the heights
Fetched by a [2] neighbouring brook.—Across the vale
The stately fence accompanied our steps;
And thus the pathway, by perennial green
Guarded and graced, seemed fashioned to unite,
As by a beautiful yet solemn chain,
The Pastor's mansion with the house of prayer.

Like image of solemnity, conjoined
With feminine allurement soft and fair,
The mansion's self displayed;—a reverend pile
With bold projections and recesses deep;
Shadowy, yet gay and lightsome as it stood
Fronting the noontide sun. We paused to admire
The pillared porch, elaborately embossed;
The low wide windows with their mullions old;
The cornice, richly fretted, of grey stone;
And that smooth slope from which the dwelling rose,
By beds and banks Arcadian of gay flowers
And flowering shrubs, protected and adorned:
Profusion bright! and every flower assuming
A more than natural vividness of hue,
From unaffected contrast with the gloom
Of sober cypress, and the darker foil
Of yew, in which survived some traces, here
Not unbecoming, of grotesque device
And uncouth fancy. From behind the roof

[1] 1836.
. . . . . . the . . 1814.

[2] 1836.
. . the . . . . . . 1814.

* See the note on the preceding page.

Rose the slim ash and massy sycamore,
Blending their diverse foliage with the green
Of ivy, flourishing and thick, that clasped
The huge round chimneys, harbour of delight
For wren and redbreast,—where they sit and sing
Their slender ditties when the trees are bare.
Nor must I leave untouched (the picture else
Were incomplete) a relique of old times [1]
Happily spared, a little Gothic niche
Of nicest workmanship; that [2] once had held
The sculptured image of some patron-saint,
Or of the blessed Virgin, looking down
On all who entered those religious doors.

But lo! where from the rocky garden-mount
Crowned by its antique summer-house—descends,
Light as the silver fawn, a radiant Girl;
For she hath recognised her honoured friend,
The Wanderer ever welcome! A prompt kiss
The gladsome Child bestows at his request;
And, up the flowery lawn as we advance,
Hangs on the old Man with a happy look,
And with a pretty restless hand of love.
—We enter—by the Lady of the place
Cordially greeted. Graceful was her port: [3]
A lofty stature undepressed by time,

[1] 1827.
Nor must I pass unnoticed (leaving else
The picture incomplete, as it appeared
Before our eyes) a relique of old times 1814.

[2] 1827.
. . . . which . . . . 1814.

[3] 1827.
—We enter;—need I tell the courteous guise
In which the Lady of the place received
Our little Band, with salutation meet
To each accorded? Graceful was her port; 1814.

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Whose visitation had not wholly spared[1]
The finer lineaments of form[2] and face;
To that complexion brought which prudence trusts in
And wisdom loves.—But when a stately ship
Sails in smooth weather by the placid coast *
On homeward voyage, what—if wind and wave,
And hardship undergone in various climes,
Have caused her to abate the virgin pride,
And that full trim of inexperienced hope
With which she left her haven—not for this,
Should the sun strike her, and the impartial breeze
Play on her streamers, fails she[3] to assume
Brightness and touching beauty of her own,
That charm all eyes. So bright, so fair, appeared[4]
This goodly Matron, shining in the beams
Of unexpected pleasure.—Soon the board
Was spread, and we partook a plain repast.

Here, resting in cool shelter, we beguiled[5]
The mid-day hours with desultory talk;
From trivial themes to general argument
Passing, as accident or fancy led,

---

[1] 1827.
. . . . . had not spared to touch 1814.
Whose gentle visitation had not spared MS.

[2] 1827.
. . . . . . frame . . 1814.

[3] 1827.
. . . . . doth she fail . . . 1827.

[4] 1827.
. . . . . So bright to us appeared 1814.

[5] 1827.
Here in cool shelter, while the scorching heat
Oppressed the fields, we sate, and entertained 1814.

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* A reminiscence of St. Bees, or of days spent on the Cumbrian coast. Compare the two sonnets (1806), *With Ships the sea was sprinkled far and nigh*, and *Where lies the Land to which yon Ship must go?* (vol. iv. pp. 40, 41).—Ed.

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Or courtesy prescribed. While question rose
And answer flowed, the fetters of reserve
Dropping from every mind, the Solitary[1]
Resumed the manners of his happier days;
And[2] in the various conversation bore
A willing, nay,[3] at times, a forward part;
Yet with the grace of one who in the world
Had learned the art of pleasing, and had now
Occasion given him to display his skill,
Upon the stedfast 'vantage-ground of truth.
He gazed, with admiration unsuppressed,
Upon the landscape of the sun-bright vale,
Seen, from the shady room in which we sate,
In softened pérspective; and more than once
Praised the consummate harmony serene
Of gravity and elegance, diffused
Around the mansion and its whole domain;
Not, doubtless, without help of female taste
And female care.—" A blessed lot is yours!"
The words escaped his lip, with a tender sigh
Breathed over them: but suddenly the door
Flew open, and a pair of lusty Boys[4]
Appeared, confusion checking their delight.
—Not brothers they in feature or attire,
But fond companions, so I guessed, in field,

[1] 1827.
Dropped from our minds; and even the shy Recluse 1814.

[2] 1827.
He . . . . 1814.

[3] 1827.
. . and, ... 1814.

[4] 1827.
He said, and with that exclamation breathed
A tender sigh;—but, suddenly the door
Opening, with eager haste two lusty Boys 1814.

. . . . breathed
A sigh;—but, suddenly, two lusty boys
Appeared,— . . . . MS.

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And by the river's margin—whence they come,
Keen anglers with unusual spoil elated.[1]
One bears a willow-pannier on his back,
The boy of plainer garb, whose blush survives
More deeply tinged. Twin might the other be
To that fair girl who from the garden-mount
Bounded:—triumphant entry this for him![2]
Between his hands he holds a smooth blue stone,
On whose capacious surface see[3] outspread
Large store of gleaming crimson-spotted trouts;
Ranged side by side, and lessening by degrees[4]
Up to the dwarf that tops the pinnacle.
Upon the board he lays the sky-blue stone
With its rich freight;[5] their number he proclaims;
Tells from what pool the noblest had been dragged;
And where the very monarch of the brook,
After long struggle, had escaped at last—

---

[1] 1836.

And by the river-side—from which they come,
A pair of Anglers, laden with their spoil. 1814.

And by the river's margin—whence they come,
Anglers elated with unusual spoil. 1827.

. . . . come
A pair of anglers, laden with fresh spoil. MS.

[2] 1827.

The Boy of plainer garb, and more abashed
In countenance,—more distant and retired.
Twin might the Other be to that fair Girl
Who bounded tow'rds us from the garden mount.
Triumphant entry this to him!—for see, 1814.

The Boy of plainer garb, and more abashed
In countenance, twin might the other be MS.

[3] 1827.

. . . . is . . 1814.

[4] 1827.

Ranged side by side, in regular ascent,
One after one, still lessening by degrees 1814.

[5] 1827.

. . . spoil;— . . . . . 1814.

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Stealing alternately at them and us
(As doth his comrade too) a look of pride:
And, verily, the silent creatures made
A splendid sight, together thus exposed;
Dead—but not sullied or deformed by death,
That seemed to pity what he could not spare.

But O, the animation in the mien
Of those two boys! yea in the very words
With which the young narrator was inspired,
When, as our questions led, he told at large
Of that day's prowess! Him might I compare,
His looks,[1] tones, gestures, eager eloquence,
To a bold brook that[2] splits for better speed,
And at the self-same moment, works its way
Through many channels, ever and anon
Parted and re-united: his compeer
To the still lake, whose stillness is to sight[3]
As beautiful—as grateful to the mind.
—But to what object shall the lovely Girl
Be likened? She whose countenance and air
Unite the graceful qualities of both,
Even as she shares the pride and joy of both.

My grey-haired Friend was moved; his vivid eye
Glistened with tenderness; his mind, I knew,
Was full; and had, I doubted not, returned,
Upon this impulse, to the theme—erewhile
Abruptly broken off. The ruddy boys
Withdrew, on summons to their well-earned meal;[4]

---

[1] 1836.
. look, ... 1814.

[2] 1827.
. . . which . . . . 1814.

[3] 1827.
. . . . . . to the eye 1814.

[4] 1827.
Did now withdraw to take their well-earned meal; 1814.

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And He—to whom all tongues resigned their rights
With willingness, to whom the general ear
Listened with readier patience than to strain
Of music, lute or harp, a long delight
That ceased not when his voice had ceased—as One
Who from truth's central point serenely views
The compass of his argument—began
Mildly, and with a clear and steady tone.

Book Ninth

DISCOURSE OF THE WANDERER, AND AN EVENING VISIT TO THE LAKE*

ARGUMENT

Wanderer asserts that an active principle pervades the Universe, its noblest seat the human soul—How lively this principle is in Childhood—Hence the delight in old Age of looking back upon Childhood—The dignity, powers, and privileges of Age asserted—These not to be looked for generally but under a just government—Right of a human Creature to be exempt from being considered as a mere Instrument[1]—*The condition of multitudes deplored*[2]—*Former conversation recurred to, and the Wanderer's opinions set in a clearer light*[3]—*Truth placed within reach of the humblest*

[1] 1836.
Vicious inclinations are best kept under by giving good ones an opportunity to shew themselves— 1814.

[2] 1836.
deplored from want of due respect to this truth on the part of their superiors in society— 1814.

[3] 1836.
Genuine principles of equality— 1814.

* "On the side of Loughrigg Fell, at the foot of the lake, and looking down upon it and the whole Vale and its encompassing mountains, the Pastor is supposed by me to stand, when at sunset he addresses his companions."—I. F.

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—Equality—Happy[1] *state of the two Boys again adverted to—Earnest wish expressed for a System of National Education established universally by Government—Glorious effects of this foretold—Walk to the Lake*[2]*—Grand spectacle from the side of a hill—Address of Priest to the Supreme Being—in the course of which he contrasts with ancient Barbarism the present appearance of the scene before him—The change ascribed to Christianity—Apostrophe to his flock, living and dead—Gratitude to the Almighty—Return over the Lake—Parting with the Solitary—Under what circumstances.*

"To every Form of being is assigned,"
Thus calmly spake the venerable Sage,
"An *active* Principle:—howe'er removed
From sense and observation, it subsists
In all things, in all natures; in the stars
Of azure heaven, the unenduring clouds,
In flower and tree, in every pebbly stone
That paves the brooks, the stationary rocks,
The moving waters, and the invisible air.
Whate'er exists hath properties that spread
Beyond itself, communicating good,
A simple blessing, or with evil mixed;
Spirit that knows no insulated spot,
No chasm, no solitude; from link to link
It circulates, the Soul of all the worlds.*
This is the freedom of the universe;
Unfolded still the more, more visible,
The more we know; and yet is reverenced least,

---

[1] 1836.
humblest—Happy 1814.

[2] 1836.
Wanderer breaks off—Walk to the Lake—embark—
Description of scenery and amusements— 1814.

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* Compare *Lines composed a few miles above Tintern Abbey* (vol. ii. p. 55, l. 100)—

A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things. Ed.

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And least respected in the human Mind,
Its most apparent home. The food of hope
Is meditated action; robbed of this
Her sole support, she languishes and dies.
We perish also; for we live by hope
And by desire; we see by the glad light
And breathe the sweet air of futurity;
And so we live, or else we have no life.
To-morrow—nay perchance this very hour
(For every moment hath[1] its own to-morrow!)
Those blooming Boys, whose hearts are almost sick
With present triumph, will be sure to find
A field before them freshened with the dew
Of other expectations;—in which course
Their happy year spins round. The youth obeys
A like glad impulse; and so moves the man
'Mid all his apprehensions, cares, and fears,—
Or so he ought to move. Ah! why in age
Do we revert so fondly to the walks
Of childhood—but that there the Soul discerns
The dear memorial footsteps unimpaired
Of her own native vigour; thence can hear[2]
Reverberations; and a choral song,
Commingling with the incense that ascends,
Undaunted, toward[3] the imperishable heavens,
From her own lonely altar?

"Do not think
That good and wise ever will be allowed,[4]
Though strength decay, to breathe in such estate

---

[1] 1820.
. . . . has . . . 1814.

[2] 1827.
Of her own native vigour—but for this,
That it is given her thence in age to hear 1814.

[3] 1827.
. . tow'rds . . . . . 1814.

[4] 1832.
. . . . will ever be allowed, 1814.

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As shall divide them wholly from the stir
Of hopeful nature. Rightly it is [1] said
That Man descends into the VALE of years;
Yet have I thought that we might also speak,
And not presumptuously, I trust, of Age,
As of a final EMINENCE; though bare
In aspect and forbidding, yet a point
On which 'tis not impossible to sit
In awful sovereignty; a place of power,
A throne, that [2] may be likened unto his,
Who, in some placid day of summer, looks
Down from a mountain-top,—say one of those
High peaks, that bound the vale where now we are.*
Faint, and diminished to the gazing eye,
Forest and field, and hill and dale appear,
With all the shapes over [3] their surface spread:
But, while the gross and visible frame of things
Relinquishes its hold upon the sense,
Yea almost on the Mind herself,[4] and seems
All unsubstantialized,—how loud the voice
Of waters, with invigorated peal
From the full river † in the vale below,
Ascending! For on that superior height
Who sits, is disencumbered from the press
Of near obstructions, and is privileged

---

[1] 1850.
. . . . is it . 1814.

[2] 1827.
. . which . . . . . . 1814.

[3] 1845.
. . . . upon . . . 1814.

[4] 1827.
. . . . . itself, . . 1814.

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* The vale of Langdale rather than that of Grasmere. It was the cottage at Hackett that was, by "the magician's wand," converted into the "Parsonage." Possibly, however, the allusion may be to Fairfield, or Stone Arthur. —ED.

† The Rothay.—ED.

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To breathe in solitude, above the host
Of ever-humming insects, 'mid thin air
That suits not them. The murmur of the leaves
Many and idle, visits[1] not his ear:
This he is freed from, and from thousand notes
(Not less unceasing, not less vain than these,)
By which the finer passages of sense
Are occupied; and the Soul, that would incline
To listen, is prevented or deterred.

"And may it not be hoped, that, placed by age
In like removal, tranquil though severe,
We are not so removed for utter loss;
But for some favour, suited to our need?
What more than that the severing should confer[2]
Fresh power to commune with the invisible world,
And hear the mighty stream of tendency *
Uttering, for elevation of our thought,
A clear sonorous voice, inaudible
To the vast multitude; whose doom it is
To run the giddy round of vain delight,
Or fret and labour on the Plain below.

"But, if to such sublime ascent the hopes
Of Man may rise, as to a welcome close
And termination of his mortal course;
Them only can such hope inspire whose minds
Have not been starved by absolute neglect;
Nor bodies crushed by unremitting toil;
To whom kind Nature, therefore, may afford
Proof of the sacred love she bears for all;
Whose birthright Reason, therefore, may ensure.

[1] 1827.
. . . . touches . . . 1814.

[2] 1827.
What more than this, that we thereby should gain 1814.

* A phrase now familiarized to English ears by Mr. Arnold's use of it.—ED.

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For me, consulting what I feel within
In times when most existence with herself
Is satisfied, I cannot but believe,
That, far as kindly Nature hath free scope
And Reason's sway predominates; even so far,
Country, society, and time itself,
That saps the individual's bodily frame,
And lays the generations low in dust,
Do, by the almighty Ruler's grace, partake
Of one maternal spirit, bringing forth
And cherishing with ever-constant love,
That tires not, nor betrays. Our life is turned
Out of her course, wherever man is made
An offering, or a sacrifice, a tool
Or implement, a passive thing employed
As a brute mean, without acknowledgment
Of common right or interest in the end;
Used or abused, as selfishness may prompt.
Say, what can follow for a rational soul
Perverted thus, but weakness in all good,
And strength in evil? Hence an after-call
For chastisement, and custody, and bonds,
And oft-times Death, avenger of the past,
And the sole guardian in whose hands we dare
Entrust the future.—Not for these sad issues
Was Man created; but to obey the law
Of life, and hope, and action. And 'tis known
That when we stand upon our native soil,
Unelbowed by such objects as oppress
Our active powers, those powers themselves become
Strong to subvert our noxious qualities:
They sweep distemper from the busy day,
And make the chalice of the big round year
Run o'er with gladness;[1] whence the Being moves

[1] 1832.
They sweep away infection from the heart;
And, by the substitution of delight,
Suppress all evil; . . . . . . 1814.

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In beauty through the world; and all who see
Bless him, rejoicing in his neighbourhood."

"Then," said the Solitary, "by what force[1]
Of language shall a feeling heart express
Her sorrow for that multitude in whom
We look for health from seeds that have been sown
In sickness, and for increase in a power
That works but by extinction? On themselves
They cannot lean, nor turn to their own hearts
To know what they must do; their wisdom is
To look into the eyes of others, thence
To be instructed what they must avoid:
Or rather, let us say, how least observed,
How with most quiet and most silent death,
With the least taint and injury to the air
The oppressor breathes, their human form divine,
And their immortal soul, may waste away."

The Sage rejoined, "I thank you—you have spared
My voice the utterance of a keen regret,
A wide compassion which with you I share.
When, heretofore, I placed before your sight
A Little-one,[2] subjected to the arts
Of modern ingenuity, and made
The senseless member of a vast machine,
Serving as doth a spindle or a wheel;
Think not, that, pitying him, I could forget
The rustic Boy, who walks the fields, untaught;

They sweep distemper from the busy day,
And make the Vessel of the big round Year
Run o'er with gladness; . . . . . 1827.

[1] 1827.
. . . . power 1814.

[2] 1827.
. . . . . . before your sight
A most familiar object of our days,
A Little-one, ... 1814.

The slave of ignorance, and oft of want,
And miserable hunger. Much, too much,
Of this unhappy lot, in early youth
We both have witnessed, lot which I myself
Shared, though in mild and merciful degree:
Yet was the[1] mind to hinderances exposed,
Through which I[2] struggled, not without distress
And sometimes injury, like a lamb[3] enthralled
'Mid thorns and brambles; or a bird that breaks
Through a strong net, and mounts upon the wind,
Though with her plumes impaired. If they, whose souls
Should open while they range the richer fields
Of merry England, are obstructed less
By indigence, their ignorance is not less,
Nor less to be deplored. For who can doubt
That tens of thousands at this day exist
Such as the boy you painted, lineal heirs
Of those who once were vassals of her soil,
Following its fortunes like the beasts or trees
Which it sustained. But no one takes delight
In this oppression; none are proud of it;
It bears no sounding name, nor ever bore;
A standing grievance, an indigenous vice
Of every country under heaven. My thoughts
Were turned to evils that are new and chosen,
A bondage lurking under shape of good,—
Arts, in themselves beneficent and kind,
But all too fondly followed and too far;—
To victims, which the merciful can see
Nor think that they are victims—turned to wrongs,
By women, who have children of their own,

---

[1] 1827.
. . my . . . . 1814.

[2] Through which she . . . . . . MS.

[3] 1827.
. . . . . . Sheep . 1814.

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Beheld without compassion, yea with praise!
I spake of mischief by the wise diffused[1]
With gladness, thinking that the more it spreads
The healthier, the securer, we become;
Delusion which a moment may destroy!
Lastly I mourned for those whom I had seen
Corrupted and cast down, on favoured ground,
Where circumstance and nature had combined
To shelter innocence, and cherish love;
Who, but for this intrusion, would have lived,
Possessed of health, and strength, and peace of mind;
Thus would have lived, or never have been born!

"Alas! what differs more than man from man!
And whence that difference? Whence but from himself?
For see the universal Race endowed
With the same upright form!—The sun is fixed,
And the infinite magnificence of heaven
Fixed, within reach[2] of every human eye;
The sleepless ocean murmurs for all ears;
The vernal field infuses fresh delight
Into all hearts. Throughout the world of sense,
Even as an object is sublime or fair,
That object is laid open to the view
Without reserve or veil; and as a power
Is salutary, or an influence sweet,
Are each and all enabled to perceive
That power, that influence, by impartial law.
Gifts nobler are vouchsafed alike to all;
Reason, and, with that reason, smiles and tears;
Imagination, freedom in the will;
Conscience to guide and check; and death to be

[1] 1827.
Which Women who have Children of their own
Regard without compassion, yea with praise!
I spake of mischief which the wise diffuse 1814.

[2] 1827.
Within the reach . . . . . . 1814.

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Foretasted, immortality conceived
By all,—a blissful immortality,
To them whose holiness on earth shall make
The Spirit capable of heaven, assured.[1]
Strange, then, nor less than monstrous, might be deemed
The failure, if the Almighty, to this point
Liberal[2] and undistinguishing, should hide
The excellence of moral qualities
From common understanding; leaving truth
And virtue, difficult, abstruse, and dark;
Hard to be won, and only by a few;
Strange, should He deal herein with nice respects,
And frustrate all the rest! Believe it not:
The primal duties shine aloft—like stars;
The charities that soothe, and heal, and bless,
Are scattered at the feet of Man—like flowers.
The generous inclination, the just rule,
Kind wishes, and good actions, and pure thoughts—
No mystery is here! Here is no boon
For high—yet not for low; for proudly graced—
Yet[3] not for meek of heart. The smoke ascends
To heaven as lightly from the cottage-hearth
As from the haughtiest[4] palace. He, whose soul
Ponders this true equality, may walk
The fields of earth with gratitude and hope;
Yet, in that meditation, will he find

[1] 1845.
. . . . . . and death to be
Foretasted, immortality presumed. 1814.

[2] 1814.
Bountiful . . . . C.

[3] 1836.
. . . . . . no special boon
For high and not for low, for proudly graced
And . . . . 1814.

[4] 1836.
. . . haughty . . . . . 1814.

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Motive to sadder grief, as we have found;
Lamenting ancient virtues overthrown,
And for the injustice grieving, that hath made
So wide a difference between[1] man and man.

"Then let us rather fix our gladdened thoughts[2]
Upon the brighter scene. How blest that pair
Of blooming Boys (whom we beheld even now)
Blest in their several and their common lot!
A few short hours of each returning day
The thriving prisoners of their village-school:
And thence let loose, to seek their pleasant homes
Or range the grassy lawn in vacancy;
To breathe and to be happy, run and shout
Idle,—but no delay, no harm, no loss;
For every genial power of heaven and earth,
Through all the seasons of the changeful year,
Obsequiously doth take upon herself
To labour for them; bringing each in turn
The tribute of enjoyment, knowledge, health,
Beauty, or strength! Such privilege is theirs,
Granted alike in the outset of their course
To both; and, if that partnership must cease,
I grieve not," to the Pastor here he turned,
"Much as I glory in that child of yours,
Repine not for his cottage-comrade, whom
Belike no higher destiny awaits
Than the old hereditary wish fulfilled;
The wish for liberty to live—content
With what Heaven grants, and die—in peace of mind,
Within the bosom of his native vale.
At least, whatever fate the noon of life

[1] 1836.
. . . . betwixt . . . 1814.

[2] 1836.
But let us rather fix our gladdened thoughts 1814.
"But let us rather turn our gladdened thoughts 1827.

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Reserves for either, sure it is[1] that both
Have been permitted to enjoy the dawn;
Whether regarded as a jocund time,
That in itself may terminate, or lead
In course of nature to a sober eve.
Both have been fairly dealt with; looking back
They will allow that justice has in them
Been shown, alike to body and to mind."

He paused, as if revolving in his soul
Some weighty matter; then, with fervent voice
And an impassioned majesty, exclaimed—

"O for the coming of that glorious time
When, prizing knowledge as her noblest wealth
And best protection, this imperial Realm
While she exacts allegiance, shall admit
An obligation, on her part, to *teach*
Them who are born to serve her and obey;
Binding herself by statute * to secure
For all the children whom her soil maintains
The rudiments of letters, and inform[2]
The mind with moral and religious truth,
Both understood and practised,—so that none,
However destitute, be left to droop
By timely culture unsustained; or run
Into a wild disorder; or be forced
To drudge through a weary life without the help[3]

[1] 1836.
. . . . this is sure, . . 1814.

[2] 1827.
. . . . . . and to inform 1814.

[3] 1836.
To drudge through weary life without the aid 1814.

* See Wordsworth's note, p. 390. Compulsory Elementary Education was secured to Scotland by the Education Act of 1872, and to England by the Act of 1880.—ED.

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Of intellectual implements and tools;
A savage horde among the civilised,
A servile band among the lordly free!
This sacred right, the lisping babe proclaims [1]
To be inherent in him, by Heaven's will,
For the protection of his innocence;
And the rude boy—who, having overpast
The sinless age, by conscience is enrolled,
Yet mutinously knits his angry brow,
And lifts his wilful hand on mischief bent,
Or turns the godlike [2] faculty of speech
To impious use—by process indirect
Declares his due, while he makes known his need.
—This sacred right is fruitlessly announced,
This universal plea in vain addressed,
To eyes and ears of parents who themselves
Did, in the time of their necessity,
Urge it in vain; and, therefore, like a prayer
That from the humblest floor ascends to heaven,
It mounts to reach the State's parental ear;
Who, if indeed she own a mother's heart,
And be not most unfeelingly devoid
Of gratitude to Providence, will grant
The unquestionable good—which, England, safe
From interference of external force,
May grant at leisure; without risk incurred
That what in wisdom for herself she doth,
Others shall e'er be able to undo.

"Look! and behold, from Calpe's sunburnt cliffs *

[1] 1827.
This right, as sacred almost as the right
To exist and be supplied with sustenance
And means of life, the lisping Babe proclaims 1814.

[2] 1827.
. . . sacred . . . . 1814.

* A promontory in Valencia, facing the Balearic Isles.—Ed.

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To the flat margin of the Baltic sea,
Long-reverenced titles cast away as weeds;
Laws overturned; and territory split,
Like fields of ice rent by the polar wind,
And forced to join in less obnoxious shapes
Which,[1] ere they gain consistence, by a gust
Of the same breath are shattered and destroyed.
Meantime the sovereignty of these fair Isles
Remains entire and indivisible:
And, if that ignorance were removed, which breeds[2]
Within the compass of their several shores
Dark discontent, or loud commotion, each
Might still preserve[3] the beautiful repose
Of heavenly bodies shining in their spheres.
—The discipline of slavery is unknown
Among[4] us,—hence the more do we require
The discipline of virtue; order else
Cannot subsist, nor confidence, nor peace.
Thus, duties rising out of good possest
And prudent caution needful to avert
Impending evil, equally require
That the whole people should be taught and trained.[5]
So shall licentiousness and black resolve
Be rooted out, and virtuous habits take

---

[1] 1814.
That . . . . 1836.
The text of 1845 returns to that of 1814.

[2] 1827.
. . . . acts 1814.

[3] 1827.
To breed commotion and disquietude,
Each might preserve . . . . . 1814.

[4] 1836.
Amongst . . . . 1814.

[5] 1827.
. . . . . do alike require
That permanent provision should be made
For the whole people to be taught and trained. 1814.

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Their place; and genuine piety descend,
Like[1] an inheritance, from age to age.

"With such foundations laid, avaunt the fear
Of numbers crowded on their native soil,
To the prevention of all healthful growth
Through mutual injury! Rather in the law
Of increase and the mandate from above
Rejoice!—and ye have special cause for joy.
—For, as the element of air affords
An easy passage to the industrious bees
Fraught with their burthens; and a way as smooth
For those ordained to take their sounding flight
From the thronged hive, and settle where they list
In fresh abodes—their labour to renew;
So the wide waters, open to the power,
The will, the instincts, and appointed needs
Of Britain, do invite her to cast off
Her swarms, and in succession send them forth;
Bound to establish new communities
On every shore whose aspect favours hope
Or bold adventure; promising to skill
And perseverance their deserved reward.

"Yes," he continued, kindling as he spake,
"Change wide, and deep, and silently performed,
This Land shall witness; and as days roll on,
Earth's universal frame shall feel the effect;
Even till the smallest habitable rock,
Beaten by lonely billows, hear the songs
Of humanised society; and bloom
With civil arts, that shall breathe forth their fragrance,[2]

---

[1] . . . . descend
Upon the humblest member of the State
Like . . . . C.

[2] 1845.
With civil arts, and send their fragrance forth, 1814.
. . . that send . . . . 1827.

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A grateful tribute to all-ruling Heaven.
From culture, unexclusively bestowed
On Albion's noble Race in freedom born,[1]
Expect these mighty issues: from the pains
And faithful [2] care of unambitious schools
Instructing simple childhood's ready ear:
Thence look for these magnificent results!
—Vast the circumference of hope—and ye
Are at its centre, British Lawgivers;
Ah! sleep not there in shame! Shall Wisdom's voice
From out the bosom of these troubled times
Repeat the dictates of her calmer mind,
And shall the venerable halls ye fill
Refuse to echo the sublime decree?
Trust not to partial care a general good;
Transfer not to futurity a work
Of urgent need.—Your Country must complete
Her glorious destiny. Begin even now,
Now, when oppression, like the Egyptian plague
Of darkness, stretched o'er guilty Europe,* makes
The brightness more conspicuous that invests
The happy Island where ye think and act;
Now, when destruction is a prime pursuit,
Show to the wretched nations for what end
The powers of civil polity were given."

Abruptly here, but with a graceful air,
The Sage broke off. No sooner had he ceased
Than, looking forth, the gentle Lady said,
"Behold the shades of afternoon have fallen

---

[1] 1827.
From Culture, universally bestowed
On Britain's noble Race in freedom born;
From Education, from that humble source, 1814.

[2] 1827.
. quiet . . . . 1814.

---

* The reference is to Napoleon Buonaparte, and his designs of conquest, "oppression," and "destruction."—ED.

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Upon this flowery slope; and see—beyond—
The silvery lake is streaked with placid blue;[1]
As if preparing for the peace of evening.*
How temptingly the landscape shines! The air
Breathes invitation; easy is the walk
To the lake's margin, where a boat lies moored
Under a[2] sheltering tree."—Upon this hint
We rose together: all were pleased; but most
The beauteous girl, whose cheek was flushed with joy.
Light as a sunbeam glides along the hills
She vanished—eager to impart the scheme
To her loved brother and his shy compeer.
—Now was there bustle in the Vicar's house
And earnest preparation.—Forth we went,
And down the vale along the streamlet's edge[3]
Pursued our way, a broken company,
Mute or conversing, single or in pairs.
Thus having reached a bridge, that overarched
The hasty rivulet where it lay becalmed
In a deep pool, by happy chance we saw
A two-fold image; on a grassy bank
A snow-white ram, and in the crystal flood
Another and the same! Most beautiful,
On the green turf, with his imperial front
Shaggy and bold, and wreathèd horns superb,
The breathing creature stood; as beautiful,
Beneath him, shewed his shadowy counterpart.
Each had his glowing mountains, each his sky,
And each seemed centre of his own fair world:
Antipodes unconscious of each other,

[1] 1836.
The Lake though bright, is of a placid blue; 1814.

[2] 1845.
Beneath her . . . . 1814.

[3] 1827.
And down the Valley on the Streamlet's bank 1814.

* See note, p. 371.—Ed.

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Yet, in partition, with their several spheres,
Blended in perfect stillness, to our sight! *

"Ah! what a pity were it to disperse,
Or to disturb, so fair a spectacle,
And yet a breath can do it!"
These few words
The Lady whispered, while we stood and gazed
Gathered together, all in still delight,
Not without awe. Thence passing on, she said
In like low voice to my particular ear,
"I love to hear that eloquent old Man
Pour forth his meditations, and descant
On human life from infancy to age.
How pure his spirit! in what vivid hues
His mind gives back the various forms of things,
Caught in their fairest, happiest, attitude!
While he is speaking, I have power to see
Even as he sees; but when his voice hath ceased,
Then, with a sigh, sometimes I feel,[1] as now,
That combinations so serene and bright
Cannot be lasting in a world like ours,
Whose highest beauty, beautiful as it is,
Like that reflected in yon quiet pool,
Seems but a fleeting sun-beam's gift, whose peace
The sufferance only of a breath of air!"[2]

---

[1] 1832.
. . . . . I sometimes feel, . . 1814.

[2] 1845.
. . . . . so serene and bright;
Like those reflected in yon quiet Pool,
Cannot be lasting in a world like ours,
To great and small disturbances exposed." 1814.

. . . . . so serene and bright;
Like those reflected in yon quiet pool,

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* Compare *Yarrow Unvisited*, ll. 43, 44 (vol. ii. p. 412)—
The swan on still St. Mary's Lake
Float double, swan and shadow. Ed.

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More had she said—but sportive shouts were heard
Sent from the jocund hearts of those two Boys,
Who, bearing each a basket on his arm,
Down the green field came tripping after us.
With caution we embarked; and now the pair
For prouder service were addrest; but each,
Wishful to leave an opening for my choice,
Dropped the light oar his eager hand had seized.
Thanks given for that becoming courtesy,
Their place I took—and for a grateful office [1]
Pregnant with recollections of the time
When, on thy bosom, spacious Windermere! *
A Youth, I practised this delightful art;
Tossed on the waves alone, or 'mid a crew
Of joyous comrades. Soon as the reedy marge
Was cleared, I dipped, with arms accordant, oars [2]

Cannot be lasting in a world whose pleasure
(And whose best beauty, beautiful as it is)
Seems but a fleeting sun-beam's gift, whose peace
The sufferance only of a breath of air!" 1836.

. . . . so serene and bright
Cannot be lasting in a world like ours,
One whose best beauty, beautiful as it is,
Like that reflected in yon quiet pool
Seems but a fleeting sun-beam's gift, whose peace
The sufferance only of a breath of air!" 1840.

[1] 1836.

—When we had cautiously embarked, the Pair
Now for a prouder service were addrest;
But an inexorable law forbade,
And each resigned the oar which he had seized.
Whereat, with willing hand I undertook
The needful labour; grateful task!—to me 1814.

[2] 1836.

. . . . Now the reedy marge
Cleared, with a strenuous arm I dipped the oar, 1814.

---

* Compare *The Prelude*, book ii. ll. 54-57 (vol. iii. p. 155)—

When summer came,
'me was, on bright half-holidays,
ng the plain of Windermere
rs.

Free from obstruction; and the boat advanced
Through crystal water, smoothly as a hawk,
That, disentangled from the shady boughs
Of some thick wood, her place of covert, cleaves
With correspondent wings the abyss of air.
—"Observe," the Vicar said, "yon rocky isle
With birch-trees fringed; * my hand shall guide the helm,
While thitherward we shape [1] our course; or while
We seek that other, on the western shore;
Where the bare columns of those lofty firs,*
Supporting gracefully a massy dome
Of sombre [2] foliage, seem to imitate
A Grecian temple rising from the Deep."

"Turn where we may," said I, "we cannot err
In this delicious region."—Cultured slopes,
Wild tracts of forest-ground, and scattered groves,
And mountains bare, or clothed with ancient woods,
Surrounded us; and, as we held our way
Along the level of the glassy flood,
They ceased not to surround us; change of place,

[1] 1836.
. . . . . bend . . . . . 1814.

[2] . darksome . . . . C.

* Dr. Cradock, the Principal of Brasenose College, Oxford, wrote to me in 1878: "The Lake is of course, in the main, that of Grasmere, 'the grassy mountain's open side' being avowedly Loughrigg Terrace. But, according to Wordsworth's habit, he has drawn his imagery from various other places—as the island of Grasmere is not 'with birch-trees fringed.' (This may well refer to Rydal.) Again, I know of no 'lilies of the vale' at Grasmere, but they are found, I believe, on one of the islands of Windermere, certainly in woods near the river Leven, below that lake. Again, the vicar refers to 'two islands' on the lake, but Grasmere has only one. I never saw a goat 'browsing by dashing waterfalls,' still less 'spotted deer' on or near Grasmere."

It seems to me that the description refers, first to Rydal lake, and then to Grasmere. The company descend, as will be seen, along a streamlet to a bridge, where they see a ram reflected in the water. They then go into a boat, and sail to the 'rocky isle with birch-trees fringed.' This cannot refer to the island in Grasmere, but it *may* refer to the larger one in Rydal. Even the 'dashing waterfall' may be the small one in the beck that descends between Nab Scar and White Moss Common. But if this be correct, and if the whole party are supposed to ascend Loughrigg Terrace later on, proceeding to a point whence they can view the vale of Grasmere, there are still some difficulties in localising the details.—Ed.

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From kindred features diversely combined,
Producing change of beauty ever new.*
—Ah! that such beauty, varying in the light
Of living nature, cannot be portrayed
By words, nor by the pencil's silent skill;
But is the property of him alone
Who hath beheld it, noted it with care,
And in his mind recorded it with love!
Suffice it, therefore, if the rural Muse
Vouchsafe sweet influence, while her Poet speaks
Of trivial occupations well devised,
And unsought pleasures springing up by chance;
As if some friendly Genius had ordained
That, as the day thus far had been enriched
By acquisition of sincere delight,
The same should be continued to its close.

One spirit animating old and young,
A gipsy-fire we kindled on the shore
Of the fair Isle with birch-trees fringed—and there,
Merrily seated in a ring, partook
A choice repast—served by our young companions[1]
With rival earnestness and kindred glee.[2]
Launched from our hands the smooth stone skimmed the lake;
With shouts we raised[3] the echoes;—stiller sounds
The lovely Girl supplied—a simple song,
Whose low tones reached not to the distant rocks
To be repeated thence,[4] but gently sank

1 . . . . . by youthful Pages served C.

2 1836.
. . . . partook
The beverage drawn from China's fragrant herb. 1814.

3 1836.
. . . roused . . . . 1814.

4 1827.
. . . there, ... 1814.

* Probably the terrace walks on Loughrigg are here referred to.—Ed.

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Into our hearts; and charmed the peaceful flood.
Rapaciously we gathered flowery spoils
From land and water; lilies of each hue—
Golden and white, that float upon the waves,
And court the wind; and leaves of that shy plant,
(Her flowers were shed) the lily of the vale,*
That loves the ground, and from the sun withholds
Her pensive beauty; from the breeze her sweets.

Such product, and such pastime, did the place
And season yield; but, as we re-embarked,
Leaving, in quest of other scenes, the shore
Of that wild spot, the Solitary said
In a low voice, yet careless who might hear,
"The fire, that burned so brightly to our wish,
Where is it now?—Deserted on the beach—
Dying, or dead![1] Nor shall the fanning breeze
Revive its ashes. What care we for this,
Whose ends are gained? Behold an emblem here
Of one day's pleasure, and all mortal joys!
And, in this unpremeditated slight
Of that which is no longer needed, see
The common course of human gratitude!"

This plaintive note disturbed not the repose
Of the still evening. Right across the lake
Our pinnace moves; then, coasting creek and bay,
Glades we behold, and into thickets peep,
Where couch the spotted deer; † or raised our eyes
To shaggy steeps on which the careless goat

---

[1] 1836.
. . . . beach
It seems extinct; nor shall . . . . 1814.

---

* Compare *The Prelude*, book ii. ll. 59-61 (vol. iii. p. 155)—
. . . . . . a Sister Isle
Beneath the oaks' umbrageous covert, sown
With lilies of the valley like a field. ED.

† See note, p. 371.—ED.

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Browsed by the side of dashing waterfalls ; *
And thus the bark, meandering with the shore,
Pursued her voyage, till a natural pier
Of jutting rock invited us to land.[1]

Alert to follow as the Pastor led,
We clomb a green hill's side ; † and, as we clomb,
The Valley, opening out her bosom, gave
Fair prospect, intercepted less and less,[2]
O'er [3] the flat meadows and indented coast
Of the smooth lake,[4] in compass seen :—far off,
And yet conspicuous, stood the old Church-tower,‡
In majesty presiding over fields
And habitations seemingly preserved [5]
From all intrusion of the restless world [6]
By rocks impassable and mountains huge.

---

[1] 1836.
Thus did the Bark, meandering with the shore,
Pursue her voyage, till a point was gained
Where a projecting line of rock, that framed
A natural pier, invited us to land. 1814.

Thus did the Bark, meandering with the shore,
Pursue her voyage, till a natural pier
Of jutting rock invited us to land. 1827.

[2] 1827.
. . . . . . and thence obtained,
Slowly, a less and less obstructed sight 1814.

[3] 1836.
Of . . . . 1814.

[4] 1827.
Of the whole lake— . . . . 1814.

[5] 1827.
. . . presiding o'er the Vale
And all her Dwellings ; seemingly preserved 1814.

[6] 1845.
From the intrusion of a restless world 1814.

---

* See note, p. 371.—Ed.
† Loughrigg.—Ed. ‡ Of Grasmere.—Ed.

Soft heath this elevated spot supplied,
And choice of moss-clad stones, whereon we couched
Or sate reclined; admiring quietly
The general aspect of the scene; but each
Not seldom over anxious to make known [1]
His own discoveries; or to favourite points
Directing notice, merely from a wish
To impart a joy, imperfect while unshared.
That rapturous moment never [2] shall I forget
When these particular interests were effaced
From every mind!—Already had the sun,
Sinking with less than ordinary state,
Attained his western bound; but rays of light—
Now suddenly diverging from the orb
Retired behind the mountain tops or veiled
By the dense air—shot upwards to the crown
Of the blue firmament—aloft, and wide:
And multitudes of little floating clouds,
Through their ethereal texture pierced—ere we,
Who saw, of change were conscious—had become [3]
Vivid as fire; clouds separately poised,—
Innumerable multitude of forms
Scattered through half the circle of the sky;
And giving back, and shedding each on each,
With prodigal communion, the bright hues
Which from the unapparent fount of glory
They had imbibed, and ceased not to receive.

---

[1] 1827.
With resting-place of mossy stone;—and there
We sate reclined—admiring quietly
The frame and general aspect of the scene;
And each not seldom eager to make known 1814.

[2] 1836.
. . . . ne'er . . . . 1814.

[3] 1836.
Pierced through their thin etherial mould, ere we,
Who saw, of change were conscious, had become 1814.

Ere we, who saw, of change were conscious, pierced
Through their ethereal texture, had become 1827.

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That which the heavens displayed, the liquid deep
Repeated; but with unity sublime!

While from the grassy mountain's open side *
We gazed, in silence hushed, with eyes intent
On the refulgent spectacle, diffused
Through earth, sky, water, and all visible space,
The Priest in holy transport thus exclaimed:

"Eternal Spirit! universal God!
Power inaccessible to human thought,
Save by degrees and steps which thou hast deigned
To furnish; for this effluence of thyself,[1]
To the infirmity of mortal sense
Vouchsafed; this local transitory type
Of thy paternal splendours, and the pomp
Of those who fill thy courts in highest heaven,
The radiant Cherubim;—accept the thanks
Which we, thy humble Creatures, here convened,
Presume to offer; we, who—from the breast
Of the frail earth, permitted to behold
The faint reflections only of thy face—
Are yet exalted, and in soul adore!
Such as they are who in thy presence stand
Unsullied, incorruptible, and drink
Imperishable majesty streamed forth
From thy empyreal throne, the elect of earth
Shall be—divested at the appointed hour
Of all dishonour, cleansed from mortal stain.
—Accomplish, then, their number; and conclude
Time's weary course! Or if, by thy decree,
The consummation that will come by stealth
Be yet far distant, let thy Word prevail,

[1] 1827.
. . . . Image of Thyself, 1814.

* Loughrigg Fell. See the Fenwick note, p. 15, and p. 374 line 6.
—Ed.

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Oh! let thy Word prevail, to take away
The sting of human nature. Spread the law,
As it is written in thy holy book,
Throughout all lands: let every nation hear
The high behest, and every heart obey;
Both for the love of purity, and hope
Which it affords, to such as do thy will
And persevere in good, that they shall rise,
To have a nearer view of thee, in heaven.
—Father of good! this prayer in bounty grant,
In mercy grant it, to thy wretched sons.
Then, nor till then, shall persecution cease,
And cruel wars expire. The way is marked,
The guide appointed, and the ransom paid.
Alas! the nations, who of yore received
These tidings, and in Christian temples meet
The sacred truth to acknowledge, linger still;
Preferring bonds and darkness to a state
Of holy freedom, by redeeming love
Proffered to all, while yet on earth detained.

"So fare the many; and the thoughtful few,
Who in the anguish of their souls bewail
This dire perverseness, cannot choose but ask,
Shall it endure?—Shall enmity and strife,
Falsehood and guile, be left to sow their seed;
And the kind never perish? Is the hope
Fallacious, or shall righteousness obtain
A peaceable dominion, wide as earth,
And ne'er to fail? Shall that blest day arrive
When they, whose choice or lot it is to dwell
In crowded cities, without fear shall live
Studious of mutual benefit; and he,
Whom Morn awakens, among dews and flowers[1]

---

[1] 1836.
Whom morning wakes, among sweet dews and flowers
1814.

Of every clime, to till the lonely field,
Be happy in himself?—The law of faith
Working through love, such conquest shall it gain,
Such triumph over sin and guilt achieve?
Almighty Lord, thy further grace impart!
And with that help the wonder shall be seen
Fulfilled, the hope accomplished; and thy praise
Be sung with transport and unceasing joy.

"Once," and with mild demeanour, as he spake,
On us the venerable Pastor turned
His beaming eye that had been raised[1] to Heaven,
"Once,[2] while the Name, Jehovah, was a sound
Within the circuit of this sea-girt isle
Unheard, the savage nations bowed the head[3]
To Gods delighting in remorseless deeds;
Gods which themselves had fashioned, to promote
Ill purposes, and flatter foul desires.
Then, in the bosom of yon mountain-cove,*
To those inventions of corrupted man
Mysterious rites were solemnised; and there—
Amid impending rocks and gloomy woods—
Of those terrific Idols some received[4]
Such dismal service, that the loudest voice
Of the swoln cataracts (which now are heard
Soft murmuring) was too weak to overcome,
Though aided by wild winds, the groans and shrieks
Of human victims, offered up to appease

1 . . . henceforward raised . . C.

2 1827.

. . . . . . and unceasing joy.
Once, while the Name . . . . 1814.

3 1827.

. . . . their heads 1814.

4 1827.

Of those dread Idols, some, perchance, received 1814.

* The reference may be to the crater-like recess or "cove," on Helm Crag, or to the more distant recesses of Easdale.—Ed.

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Or to propitiate. And, if living eyes
Had visionary faculties to see
The thing that hath been as the thing that is,
Aghast we might behold this crystal[1] Mere
Bedimmed with smoke, in wreaths voluminous,
Flung from the body of devouring fires,
To Taranis erected * on the heights
By priestly hands, for sacrifice performed
Exultingly, in view of open day
And full assemblage of a barbarous host;
Or to Andates, female Power † who gave
(For so they fancied) glorious victory.
—A few rude monuments of mountain-stone
Survive; all else is swept away.—How bright
The appearances of things! From such, how changed
The existing worship; and with those compared,
The worshippers how innocent and blest!
So wide the difference, a willing mind
Might almost think, at this affecting hour,[2]

[1] 1827.
. . . . . . spacious . 1814.

[2] 1836.
At this affecting hour, might almost think 1814.

* A name of Jupiter among the Druids in Gaul. Toland, in his *History of the Druids* (p. 247), gives a list of the *Dii Gallorum*, beginning with *Taramis* and ending with *Adraste* or *Andate*. And, in an edition of Toland's *History*, edited with elaborate notes by R. Huddleston, schoolmaster, Lunan, and published at Montrose in 1814, I find the following, p. 357:—"Taramis, or *Taranis*, is the Gaelic *Taran*, or *Tharan*, *i.e.* 'thunder.' This god is the same with the Grecian *Zeus*, or the Roman *Jupiter*. By this deity the Celts understood *Baal*. *Taranis*, or *Tharanis*, is sometimes written *Tanaris*, or *Thanaris*, which bears a great affinity to the English *thunder*, the German *Donder*, and the Roman *Tonitru*. Lucan mentions him (lib. i.) in these words—

Et Taranis Scythicæ non mitior ara Dianæ.

From the Celts the Germans borrowed *Tharanis*, and by abbreviation formed their God *Thor*, whence *Thursday*, the same as the Roman *Dies Iovis*." Compare Southey's *Book of the Church*, vol. i. p. 5.—ED.

† The same editor of Toland's book on the Druids, whose comment on Taranis is given in the previous note, writes thus of Adraste, or Andate, p. 359:—"Respecting this goddess there has been some difference of opinion. The Greeks seem to have considered her as *Nemesis*, or the goddess of revenge. . . . There can be little doubt that the goddess here meant is the Phœnician *Ashtaroth*, or *Astarte*, *i.e.* 'the moon.'" See Dio Cassius, i. 64. —ED.

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That paradise, the lost abode of man,
Was raised again: and to a happy few,
In its original beauty, here restored.

"Whence but from thee, the true and only God,
And from the faith derived through Him who bled
Upon the cross, this marvellous advance
Of good from evil; as if one extreme
Were left, the other gained.—O ye, who come
To kneel devoutly in yon reverend Pile,*
Called to such office by the peaceful sound
Of sabbath bells; and ye, who sleep in earth,
All cares forgotten, round its hallowed walls!
For you, in presence of this little band
Gathered together on the green hill-side,
Your Pastor is emboldened to prefer
Vocal thanksgivings to the eternal King;
Whose love, whose counsel, whose commands, have made
Your very poorest rich in peace of thought
And in good works; and him, who is endowed
With scantiest knowledge, master of all truth
Which the salvation of his soul requires.
Conscious of that abundant favour showered
On you, the children of my humble care,
And this dear land, our country, while on earth
We sojourn, have I lifted up my soul,
Joy giving voice to fervent gratitude.[1]
These barren rocks, your stern inheritance;
These fertile fields, that recompense your pains;
The shadowy vale, the sunny mountain-top;
Woods waving in the wind their lofty heads,

[1] 1827.
On your Abodes, and this beloved Land,
Our birth-place, home, and Country, while on Earth
We sojourn,—loudly do I utter thanks
With earnest joy, that will not be suppressed. 1814.

* Grasmere Church.—Ed.

Or hushed; the roaring waters, and[1] the still—
They see the offering of my lifted hands,
They hear my lips present their sacrifice,
They know if I be silent, morn or even:*
For, though in whispers speaking, the full heart
Will find a vent; and thought is praise to him,
Audible praise, to thee, omniscient Mind,
From whom all gifts descend, all blessings flow!"

This vesper-service closed, without delay,
From that exalted station to the plain
Descending, we pursued our homeward course,
In mute composure, o'er the shadowy lake,
Under[2] a faded sky. No trace remained
Of those celestial splendours; grey the vault—
Pure, cloudless, ether; and the star of eve
Was wanting; but inferior lights appeared
Faintly, too faint almost for sight; and some
Above the darkened hills stood boldly forth
In twinkling lustre, ere the boat attained
Her mooring-place; where, to the sheltering tree,
Our youthful Voyagers bound fast her prow,
With prompt yet careful hands. This done, we paced
The dewy fields; but ere the Vicar's door
Was reached, the Solitary checked his steps;
Then, intermingling thanks, on each bestowed
A farewell salutation; and, the like
Receiving, took the slender path that leads
To the one cottage in the lonely dell:†

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[1] 1827.
. . . . or . . 1814.

[2] 1836.
Beneath . . . . 1814.

---

* Compare *Paradise Lost*, book v. l. 202—
Witness if I be silent, morn or even. ED.

† At Blea Tarn.—ED.

But turned not without welcome promise made[1]
That he would share the pleasures and pursuits
Of yet another summer's day,* not loth
To wander with us through the fertile vales,[2]
And o'er the mountain-wastes. "Another sun,"
Said he, "shall shine upon us, ere we part;
Another sun, and peradventure more;
If time, with free consent, be yours[3] to give,
And season favours."

To enfeebled Power,
From this communion with uninjured Minds,
What renovation had been brought; and what
Degree of healing to a wounded spirit,
Dejected, and habitually disposed
To seek, in degradation of the Kind,
Excuse and solace for her own defects;
How far those erring notions were reformed;
And whether aught, of tendency as good
And pure, from further intercourse ensued;
This—if delightful hopes, as heretofore,
Inspire the serious song, and gentle Hearts
Cherish, and lofty Minds approve the past—
My future labours may not leave untold.

---

[1] 1845.
. . . . . in the lonely dell,
His chosen residence. But, ere he turned
Aside, a welcome promise had been given, 1814.

But turned not without welcome promise given, 1827.

[2] 1845.
Of yet another summer's day. consumed
In wandering with us through the Vallies fair, 1814.

. . . . given up
To wandering . . . . C.

[3] 1814.
. . . . . is yours . . 1827.
The text of 1845 returns to that of 1814.

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* See the Fenwick note, p. 15.—Ed.

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NOTES

THE following are the notes which Wordsworth added to *The Excursion* in the edition of 1814. In the case of the second, it will be observed that a new note was substituted in 1827 for that of 1814 and 1820. In other respects these "notes" remained unaltered throughout the editions, from 1814 to 1850. I have not thought it necessary to indicate the few, and very slight, changes in the phraseology of separate sentences. The text of the passages, on which the notes are based, is taken from the edition of 1850.—ED.

Preface, page 25.

Descend, prophetic Spirit! that inspir'st
The human Soul, etc.

Not mine own fears, nor the prophetic Soul
Of the wide world dreaming on things to come.
Shakspeare's Sonnets.—W. W. (1814).

Page 43.

—— *much did he see of men.*

In Heron's Tour in Scotland is given an intelligent account of the qualities by which this class of men used to be, and still are in some degree, distinguished, and of the benefits which society derives from their labours. Among their characteristics, he does not omit to mention that, from being obliged to pass so much of their time in solitary wandering among rural objects, they frequently acquire meditative habits of mind, and are strongly disposed to enthusiasm poetical and religious. I regret that I have not the book at hand to quote the passage, as it is interesting on many accounts. (1814.)

At the risk of giving a shock to the prejudices of artificial

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society, I have ever been ready to pay homage to the aristocracy of nature; under a conviction that vigorous human-heartedness is the constituent principle of true taste. It may still, however, be satisfactory to have prose testimony how far a Character, employed for purposes of imagination, is founded upon general fact. I, therefore, subjoin an extract from an author who had opportunities of being well acquainted with a class of men, from whom my own personal knowledge emboldened me to draw this portrait.

"We learn from Cæsar and other Roman Writers, that the travelling merchants who frequented Gaul and other barbarous countries, either newly conquered by the Roman arms, or bordering on the Roman conquests, were ever the first to make the inhabitants of those countries familiarly acquainted with the Roman modes of life, and to inspire them with an inclination to follow the Roman fashions, and to enjoy Roman conveniences. In North America, travelling merchants from the Settlements have done and continue to do much more towards civilising the Indian natives, than all the missionaries, papist or protestant, who have ever been sent among them.

"It is farther to be observed, for the credit of this most useful class of men, that they commonly contribute, by their personal manners, no less than by the sale of their wares, to the refinement of the people among whom they travel. Their dealings form them to great quickness of wit and acuteness of judgment. Having constant occasion to recommend themselves and their goods, they acquire habits of the most obliging attention, and the most insinuating address. As in their peregrinations they have opportunity of contemplating the manners of various men and various cities, they become eminently skilled in the knowledge of the world. *As they wander, each alone, through thinly-inhabited districts, they form habits of reflection and of sublime contemplation.* With all these qualifications, no wonder, that they should often be, in remote parts of the country, the best mirrors of fashion, and censors of manners; and should contribute much to polish the roughness, and soften the rusticity of our peasantry. It is not more than twenty or thirty years since a young man going from any part of Scotland to England, of purpose to *carry the pack*, was considered as going to lead the life and acquire the fortune of a gentleman. When, after twenty years' absence, in that honourable line of employment, he returned with his acquisitions to his native country, he was regarded as a gentleman to all

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intents and purposes."—Heron's *Journey in Scotland*, vol. i. p. 89.—W. W. (1827).

Page 110.

Lost in unsearchable eternity!

Since this paragraph was composed, I have read with so much pleasure, in Burnet's Theory of the Earth, a passage expressing corresponding sentiments, excited by objects of a similar nature, that I cannot forbear to transcribe it.

"Siquod verò Natura nobis dedit spectaculum, in hâc tellure, verè gratum, et philosopho dignum, id semel mihi contigisse arbitror; cùm ex celsissimâ rupe speculabundus ad oram maris Mediterranei, hinc æquor cæruleum, illinc tractus Alpinos prospexi; nihil quidem magìs dispar aut dissimile, nec in suo genere, magìs egregium et singulare. Hoc theatrum ego facilè prætulerim Romanis cunctis, Græcisve, atque id quod natura hîc spectandum exhibet, scenicis ludis omnibus, aut amphitheatri certaminibus. Nihil hîc elegans aut venustum, sed ingens et magnificum, et quod placet magnitudine suâ et quâdam specie immensitatis. Hinc intuebar maris æquabilem superficiem, usque et usque diffusam, quantum maximùm oculorum acies ferri potuit; illinc disruptissimam terræ faciem, et vastas moles variè elevatas aut depressas, erectas, propendentes, reclinatas, coacervatas, omni situ inæquali et turbido: Placuit ex hâc parte Naturæ unitas et simplicitas, et inexhausta quædam planities; ex alterâ, multiformis confusio magnorum corporum, et insanæ rerum strages: quas cùm intuebar, non urbis alicujus aut oppidi, sed confracti mundi rudera, ante oculos habere mihi visus sum.

"In singulis ferè montibus erat aliquid insolens et mirabile, sed præ cæteris mihi placebat illa, quâ sedebam, rupes; erat maxima et altissima, et quâ terram respiciebat, molliori ascensu altitudinem suam dissimulabat: quà verò mare, horrendúm præceps, et quasi ad perpendiculum facta instar parietis. Prætereà facies illa marina adeò erat lævis ac uniformis (quod in rupibus aliquando observare licet) ac si scissa fuisset à summo ad imum, in illo plano, vel terræ motu aliquo, aut fulmine divulsa.

"Ima pars rupis erat cava, recessusque habuit, et saxeos specus, euntes in vacuum montem; sive naturâ pridem factos, sive exesos mari, et undarum crebris ictibus: In hos enim cum impetu ruebant, et fragore æstuantis maris fluctus, quos

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iterum spumantes reddidit antrum, et quasi ab imo ventre evomuit.

"Dextrum latus montis erat præruptum, aspero saxo et nudâ caute; sinistrum non adeò neglexerat Natura, arboribus utpote ornatum: et prope pedem montis rivus limpidæ aquæ prorupit, qui cùm vicinam vallem irrigaverat, lento motu serpens, et per varios mæandros, quasi ad protrahendam vitam, in magno mari absorptus subito periit. Denique in summo vertice promontorii, commodè eminebat saxum, cui insidebam contemplabundus. Vale augusta sedes, Rege digna: Augusta rupes, semper mihi memoranda!" P. 89. *Telluris Theoria sacra, etc. Editio secunda.*—W. W. 1814).

Page 139.

Of Mississippi, or that northern stream.

"A man is supposed to improve by going out into the *World*, by visiting *London*. Artificial man does; he extends with his sphere; but, alas! that sphere is microscopic; it is formed of minutiæ, and he surrenders his genuine vision to the artist, in order to embrace it in his ken. His bodily senses grow acute, even to barren and inhuman pruriency; while his mental become proportionally obtuse. The reverse is the Man of Mind: he who is placed in the sphere of Nature and of God, might be a mock at Tattersall's and Brooks's, and a sneer at St. James's: he would certainly be swallowed alive by the first *Pizarro* that crossed him:—But when he walks along the river of Amazons; when he rests his eye on the unrivalled Andes; when he measures the long and watered savannah; or contemplates, from a sudden promontory, the distant, vast Pacific—and feels himself a freeman in this vast theatre, and commanding each ready produced fruit of this wilderness, and each progeny of this stream—his exaltation is not less than imperial. He is as gentle, too, as he is great: his emotions of tenderness keep pace with his elevation of sentiment; for he says, 'These were made by a good Being, who, unsought by me, placed me here to enjoy them.' He becomes at once a child and a king. His mind is in himself; from hence he argues, and from hence he acts, and he argues unerringly, and acts magisterially; his mind in himself is also in his God; and therefore he loves, and therefore he soars."—From the notes upon *The Hurricane*, a Poem, *by William Gilbert.**

* *The Hurricane, a Theosophical and Western Eclogue, etc.*, by William Gilbert, London, 1797. Compare Wordsworth's notes to *The Brothers.*—Ed.

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The Reader, I am sure, will thank me for the above quotation, which, though from a strange book, is one of the finest passages of modern English prose.—W. W. (1814).

Page 149.

'Tis, by comparison, an easy task
Earth to despise, etc.

See, upon this subject, Baxter's most interesting review of his own opinions and sentiments in the decline of life. It may be found (lately reprinted) in Dr. Wordsworth's *Ecclesiastical Biography*.—W. W. (1814).

Page 152.

Alas! the endowment of immortal Power,
Is matched unequally with custom, time, etc.

This subject is treated at length in the *Ode*, *Intimations of Immortality*.—W. W. (1814).

Page 156.

Knowing the heart of man is set to be, etc.

The passage quoted from Daniel is taken from a poem addressed to the Lady Margaret, Countess of Cumberland, and the two last lines, printed in Italics, are by him translated from Seneca. The whole Poem is very beautiful. I will transcribe four stanzas from it, as they contain an admirable picture of the state of a wise Man's mind in a time of public commotion.

Nor is he moved with all the thunder-cracks
Of tyrant's threats, or with the surly brow
Of Power, that proudly sits on others' crimes;
Charged with more crying sins than those he checks.
The storms of sad confusion that may grow
Up in the present for the coming times,
Appal not him; that hath no side at all,
But of himself, and knows the worst can fall.

Although his heart (so near allied to earth)
Cannot but pity the perplexed state
Of troublous and distressed mortality,
That thus make way unto the ugly birth
Of their own sorrows, and do still beget
Affliction upon Imbecility;

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Yet seeing thus the course of things must run,
He looks thereon not strange, but as fore-done.

And whilst distraught ambition compasses,
And is encompassed, while as craft deceives,
And is deceived: whilst man doth ransack man,
And builds on blood, and rises by distress;
And th' Inheritance of desolation leaves
To great-expecting hopes: He looks thereon,
As from the shore of peace, with unwet eye,
And bears no venture in Impiety.

Thus, Lady, fares that man that hath prepared
A rest for his desires; and sees all things
Beneath him; and hath learned this book of man,
Full of the notes of frailty; and compared
The best of glory with her sufferings:
By whom, I see, you labour all you can
To plant your heart! and set your thoughts as near
His glorious mansion as your powers can bear. (1814.)

Page 221.

Or rather, as we stand on holy earth,
And have the dead around us.

Leo. You, Sir, could help me to the history
Of half these graves?
Priest. For eight-score winters past,
With what I've witnessed, and with what I've heard,
Perhaps I might; . . . . .
By turning o'er these hillocks one by one,
We two could travel, Sir, through a strange round;
Yet all in the broad highway of the world.

See the Author's poem of *The Brothers*, published in the "Lyrical Ballads," in the year 1800.—W. W. (1814).

Page 233.

And suffering Nature grieved that one should die.

Southey's Retrospect.—W. W. (1814).

Page 233.

And whence that tribute? wherefore these regards?

The sentiments and opinions here uttered are in unison with those expressed in the . . . Essay upon Epitaphs, which was

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furnished by me for Mr. Coleridge's periodical work, *The Friend;* and as they are dictated by a spirit congenial to that which pervades this and the two succeeding books, the sympathising reader will not be displeased to see the Essay here annexed.*—W. W. (1814).

Page 236.

And spires whose ' silent finger points to heaven.'

An instinctive taste teaches men to build their churches in flat countries with spire-steeples, which as they cannot be referred to any other object, point as with silent finger to the sky and stars, and sometimes, when they reflect the brazen light of a rich though rainy sunset, appear like a pyramid of flame burning heaven-ward. See *The Friend*, by S. T. Coleridge, No. 14, p. 223.—W. W. (1814).

Page 308.

That sycamore, which annually holds
Within its shade, as in a stately tent.

This Sycamore oft musical with Bees;
Such Tents the Patriarchs loved.
S. T. Coleridge.—W. W. (1814).

(It is in his *Inscription for a fountain on a Heath.*—Ed.)

Page 323.

Perish the roses and the flowers of kings.

The "Transit gloria mundi" is finely expressed in the Introduction to the Foundation-charters of some of the ancient Abbeys. Some expressions here used are taken from that of the Abbey of St. Mary's, Furness, the translation of which is as follows :—

"Considering every day the uncertainty of life, that the roses and flowers of Kings, Emperors, and Dukes, and the crowns and palms of all the great, wither and decay; and that all things, with an uninterrupted course, tend to dissolution and death: I therefore," etc.—W. W. (1814).

* In this edition, it finds a more appropriate place in the *Prose Works.* —Ed.

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Page 331.

——*Earth has lent*
Her waters, Air her breezes.

In treating this subject, it was impossible not to recollect, with gratitude, the pleasing picture, which, in his Poem of *The Fleece*, the excellent and amiable Dyer has given of the influences of manufacturing industry upon the face of this Island. He wrote at a time when machinery was first beginning to be introduced, and his benevolent heart prompted him to augur from it nothing but good. Truth has compelled me to dwell upon the baneful effects arising out of an ill-regulated and excessive application of powers so admirable in themselves.—W. W. (1814).

Page 363.

Binding herself by statute.

The discovery of Dr. Bell affords marvellous facilities for carrying this into effect; and it is impossible to over-rate the benefit which might accrue to humanity from the universal application of this simple engine under an enlightened and conscientious government.—W. W. (1814).

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APPENDIX

NOTE A

(See p. 2)

THE grave of James Patrick,—the pedlar whose character and habits gave rise to "The Wanderer" of *The Excursion*,—may still be seen in the church-yard within the town of Kendal. The following extract from the *Papers, Letters, and Journals of William Pearson*, edited by his widow, and printed in London, in 1863, for private circulation, refers to Patrick. "He" (*i.e.* William Pearson) "sometimes went to Kendal on Sundays, in order to worship with Unitarians, in the old Presbyterian *meeting-house.* This quiet secluded building, though situated in the heart of the town, is overshadowed by trees, beneath which rest many worthies of departed times: one of whom, James Patrick, was the prototype of 'The Wanderer' of *The Excursion.* A plain mural slab, outside the east wall of the chapel—which was his spiritual home—bears the following inscription :—

NEAR THIS PLACE ARE BURIED
JOHN PATRICK OF BARNARD CASTLE,
WHO DIED MAY 10TH, 1753, AGED 51 YEARS;
MARGARET, THE DAUGHTER
OF JAMES AND MARY PATRICK,
WHO DIED NOVEMBER 26TH, 1767, IN HER INFANCY;
JAMES PATRICK OF KENDAL,
WHO DIED MARCH 2D, 1787, AGED 71 YEARS.

"When staying in Kendal, with his friend Mr. Thomas Cookson, Mr. Wordsworth himself was an occasional worshipper, along with the family, at this chapel; and thus became acquainted with the minister, the Reverend John Harrison, and

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with one of his congregation, the well-known blind mathematician and botanist, Mr. John Gough, with the delineation of whose remarkable powers and character the poet has enriched his *Excursion;* and in turn, has, by the touch of his genius, imparted to them a lustre that will not fade, whilst English Literature shall endure" (p. 13).

NOTE B

(See p. 115)

The following is an extract from Dr. Daniel G. Brinton's work, the *Myths of the New World.*

"As in oriental legends, the origin of man from the earth was veiled under the story that he was the progeny of some mountain by the embrace of Mithras or Jupiter, so the Indians often pointed to some height or some cavern as the spot whence the first of men issued, adult and armed, from the womb of the All-mother Earth. The oldest name of the Alleghany Mountains is Paemotinck, or Pemolnick, an Algonkin word, the meaning of which is said to be "The origin of the Indians."

"The Witchitas, who dwelt on the Red River among the mountains named after them, have a tradition that their progenitors issued from the rocks about their homes, and many other tribes, the Tahkalis, Navajos, Coryoteras, and the Hailians, for instance, set up this claim to be autochthones. . . .

"All those tribes, the Creeks, Seminoles, Choctaws, Chicasaws, and Natchez, who, according to tradition, were in remote times banded into one common confederacy under the headship of the last-mentioned, unanimously located their earliest ancestry near an artificial eminence in the valley of the Big Black River, in the Natchez country, whence they pretended to have emerged. . . .

"A parallel to this southern legend occurs among the Six Nations of the north. They with one consent, if we may credit the account of Cusic, looked to a mountain near the falls of the Oswego River, in the State of New York, as the locality where the forefathers first saw the light of day, and that they had some such legend the name Oneida, people of the Stone, would seem to testify. . . .

"An ancient legend of the Aztecs derived their nation from a place called Chicomoztoc, the Seven Caverns, located north of Mexico. Antiquaries have indulged in all sorts of speculations as to what this means. . . . Caverns and hollow trees

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were in fact the homes and temples of our first parents, and from them they went forth to conquer and adorn the world; and from the inorganic constituents of the soil acted on by Light, treated by Divine Force, vivified by the Spirit, did in reality the first of men proceed.

"This cavern, which thus dimly lingered in the memories of nations, occasionally expanded to a nether world, imagined to underlie this of ours, and still inhabited by beings of our kind, who have never been lucky enough to discover its exit. The Mandans and Minnetarees, on the Missouri River, supposed this exit was near a certain hill in their territory. . . ."—*Myths of the New World*, pp. 224-8.

Mr. Edward B. Tylor, Oxford, suggests that the legend referred to may be that described in Falkner's account of the Moluches.

"They believe that their good deities made the world, and that they first created the Indians in their caves, gave them the lance, the bow and arrows, and the stone-bowls, to fight and hunt with, and then turned them out to shift for themselves. They imagine that the deities of the Spaniards did the same by them. . . . They have formed a belief that some of them after death return to their divine caverns," etc. (Falkner's *Description of Patagonia and the adjoining parts of South America, etc.*, chap. v. pp. 114-5, by Thomas Falkner, Hereford, 1774.)

See also Edward B. Tylor's *Early History of Mankind*, p. 313.—ED.

NOTE C

(See p. 140)

For the following letters in reference to the "Muccawiss," I am indebted to Mr. Henry Reed,—son of the late Professor Reed of Philadelphia,—whose assistance in all matters relating to Wordsworth in America has been invaluable.

"NO. 400 CHESTNUT STREET, PHILADELPHIA,
"*September 26th*, 1883.

"MY DEAR MR. KNIGHT—Dr. Brinton tells me that Muccawiss is the Algonquin for whip-poor-will, and he will ascertain for me the precise spelling, and, if possible, the book from which W. W. probably got his information.—Yours sincerely, HENRY REED."

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"115 South Seventh Street,
"*September 27th*, 1883.

"Dear Sir—I have failed to find the exact word used by Wordsworth—muccawiss. The nearest to it is 'moshkaois,' which signifies 'bittern,' a water-fowl of the diver class, to which the name has reference, it being a derivative from a verb meaning to rise to the surface of the water. The word is no doubt of Algonkin origin, and I would suggest that you write to the Algonkin scholar, *par excellence*, of our country, Colonel J. Hammond Trumbull, Hartford, Conn., who is both able and willing to solve all the enigmas of that difficult tongue.—Very truly yours, D. G. Brinton."

"Henry Reed, Esq."

"No. 400 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia,
"*October 2nd*, 1883.

"My dear Mr. Knight—I enclose a letter from Colonel Trumbull, which I think you will find satisfactory.—Yours very sincerely, Henry Reed."

"Hartford, Conn., *September 29th*, 1883.

"Henry Reed, Esq., Philadelphia.

"Dear Sir—Wordsworth's 'Muccawis' was, certainly, a Whip-poor-will, and he must have taken the Indian name, directly or at second-hand, from Carver's *Travels*. Among the birds 'found in the interior parts of North America,' Carver (chap. 18) describes 'the Whipper-will, or, as it is termed by the Indians, the *Muckawis*. . . . As soon as night comes on, these birds will place themselves on the fences, stumps, or stones that lie near some house, and *repeat their melancholy notes without any variation* till midnight,' etc. So Wordsworth's

Melancholy muccawis
Repeated, o'er and o'er, his plaintive cry.

"I have an impression—which I have not just now leisure to verify—that Carver's description of this and some other American birds was reprinted in the *Gentleman's Magazine*. Two or three English editions of the *Travels* had been printed before *The Excursion* was written.

"I find no other authority for this 'Indian' name. The Chippeway name for the Whip-poor-will is (as given by Tanner or Dr. E. James) *Wăwonaissa*. Nuttall states, the Delaware name was *Wecoălis*: Zeisberger wrote it *Wecoolis*.—Yours sincerely, J. Hammond Trumbull."

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"*P.S.*—Carver did not name 'the merry mocking-bird'—which Wordsworth makes the companion of the 'Muccawis'; but Campbell had heard of 'the *merry mock-bird's* song,' and copied a description of it from Ashe's *Travels in America*, in a note to *Gertrude of Wyoming* (1809), pt. i. st. 3."

Since receiving these letters I have ascertained that Wordsworth had in his library at Rydal Mount—whether he had it at Allan Bank I cannot say—a copy of one of the English editions of Carver's *Travels*.

Compare *Wanderings in South America, etc.*, by Charles Waterton—a work which was also in Wordsworth's library at Rydal. I quote from a recent edition (1879). See pp. 99, 111, 199, and 488:—

"When in thy hammock, should the thought of thy little crosses and disappointments, in thy ups and downs through life, break in upon thee, and throw thee into a pensive mood, the owl will bear thee company. She will tell thee that hard has been her fate too; and at intervals 'Whip-poor-will' and 'Willy-come-go' will take up the tale of sorrow. Ovid has told thee how the owl once boasted the human form, and lost it for a very small offence; and were the poet alive now, he would inform thee, that 'Whip-poor-will' and 'Willy-come-go' are the shades of these poor African and Indian slaves, who died worn out and broken-hearted. They wail and cry, 'Whip-poor-will' and 'Willy-come-go' all night long; and often, when the moon shines, you see them sitting on the green turf, near the houses of those whose ancestors tore them from the bosom of their helpless families, which all probably perished through grief and want, after their support was gone" (p. 99).

"The Caprimulgus wheels in busy flight around the canoe, while 'Whip-poor-will' sits on the broken stump near the water's edge, complaining as the shades of night set in" (p. 111).

The following is from *Ornithological Biography, or an Account of the Habits of the Birds of America*, vol. i. p. 422, by John James Audubon, Edinburgh, 1831.

"Whip-poor-will, *Caprimulgus vociferus*, a species of Night-jar. Immediately after the arrival of these birds their notes are heard in the dusk and through the evening, in every part of the thickets, and along the skirts of the woods. They are clear and loud, and to me are more interesting than those of the Nightingale. . . . The Whip-poor-will continues its

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lively song for several hours after sunset, and then remains silent until the first dawn of day, when its notes echo through every vale, and along the declivities of the mountains, until the beams of the rising sun scatter the darkness that overhung the face of Nature. Hundreds are often heard at the same time in different parts of the wood, each trying to outdo the others. . . . The cry consists of three distinct notes, the first and last of which are emphatical and sonorous, the intermediate one less so. These three notes are preceded by a low cluck, which seems preparatory to the others. A fancied resemblance which its notes have to the syllables *whip-poor-will* has given rise to the common name of the bird."

NOTE D

(See p. 173)

A translation of the passage from Pausanias is quoted in the text. I append extracts from some letters I have received on the subject. The first are from Mr. Heard, Fettes College, Edinburgh.

October 5th.

"I cannot find a reference to Cephisus; but I send you a passage in point from Homer, *Iliad*, 23, 140. I rather suspect Wordsworth had this passage in mind, for no commentator I have quotes a parallel; in which case he has either forgotten *Spercheius* as the river, or substituted, on purpose, the better known Attic river.

"Achilles offers to the dead Patroclus the locks which his father had vowed to Spercheius, if ever he returned to his native land:

ἔνθ' αὖτ' ἄλλ' ἐνόησε ποδάρκης δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς·
στὰς ἀπάνευθε πυρῆς ξανθὴν ἀπεκείρατο χαίτην
τήν ῥα Σπερχειῷ ποταμῷ τρέφε τηλεθόωσαν·
ὀχθήσας δ' ἄρα εἶπεν ἰδὼν ἐπὶ οἴνοπα πόντον·
Σπερχεί', ἄλλως σοίγε πατὴρ ἠρήσατο Πηλεὺς
κεῖσέ με νοστήσαντα φίλην ἐς πατρίδα γαῖαν
σοί τε κόμην κερέειν.

. . . .

October 13th.

"I have discovered the reference to the Cephisus. It is from Pausanias, 1, 37, 3. I transcribe the passage: you will notice the reference to the Spercheius of the *Iliad*.

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"πρὶν δὲ διαβῆναι τὸν Κηφισόν, Θεοδώρου μνῆμά ἐστι τραγῳδίαν ὑποκριναμένου τῶν καθ' αὑτὸν ἄριστα. ἀγάλματα δὲ ἐπὶ τῷ ποταμῷ Μνησιμάχης, τὸ δὲ ἕτερον ἀνάθημα κειρομένου οἱ τὴν κόμην τοῦ παιδὸς ἐπὶ τῷ Κηφισῷ. καθεστάναι δὲ ἐκ παλαιοῦ καὶ τοῖς πᾶσι τοῦτο Ἕλλησι τῇ Ὁμήρου τις ἂν τεκμαίροιτο ποιήσει, ὃς τὸν Πηλέα εὔξασθαί φησι τῷ Σπερχειῷ κερεῖν ἀνασωθέντος ἐκ Τροίας Ἀχιλλέως τὴν κόμην.

"There can be little doubt that Wordsworth had this passage in mind. The Cephisus is the Attic one; this is a statue, which Pausanias saw on the banks of the river, of the son of Mnesimache cutting his locks over the stream."

Professor Campbell writes:—"The Homeric passage is *Iliad*, 23, 140-151, where Achilles cuts off for Patroclus the lock of hair, which *his father Peleus* had vowed to the river Spercheius in case of his son's safe return. This is referred to by Plato,—*Rep.* 3, 391 B,—who regards it as an act of impiety to have given that, which was sacred to the river, to a dead body.

"Unless the passage in Pausanias is singularly apposite, I should think that this passage must have been in Wordsworth's mind, and that by a perfectly legitimate use of poetic freedom, in speaking of the later Greek civilisation, he had put the Attic in place of the Phthiotic river."

Since receiving Mr. Heard's letter, I have found that Wordsworth possessed a copy of Thomas Taylor's translation of Pausanias's *Description of Greece*, published in 1794, a copy of that work having been sold at the Rydal Mount sale in 1859. Bishop Wordsworth of St. Andrews has also directed my attention to the following note to Pope's translation of the *Iliad*, a copy of which his uncle possessed. Book xxiii. 175.

"It was the custom of the ancients not only to offer their own hair, but likewise to consecrate that of their children to the river-gods of their country. This is what Pausanias shews in his Attics; *Before you pass the Cephisa*, says he, *you find the tomb of Theodorus, who was the most excellent actor of his time for tragedy; and, on the banks you see two statues, one of Mnesimachus, and the other of his son, who cut off his hair in honour of the rivers; for that this was in all ages the custom of the Greeks, may be inferred from Homer's poetry, where Peleus promises by a solemn vow to consecrate to the river Sperchius the hair of his son, if he returns safe from the Trojan war.* This custom was likewise in Egypt, where Philostratus tells us that

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Memnon consecrated his hair to the Nile. This practice of Achilles was imitated by Alexander at the funeral of Hephæstion."

It is likely that Wordsworth had read this note to the annotated edition (1763) of Pope's *Homer*; but it is also probable that he was familiar with the passage in Pausanias.

NOTE E

(See p. 303)

Many particulars regarding John Gough may be found in Cornelius Nicholson's *Annals of Kendal*, pp. 355-368 (Whitaker and Coy., 1861). He was born in 1757 and died in 1825. "Before the completion of his third year, he was attacked with small-pox, which deprived him of his sight. The whole globe of the left eye was destroyed: the damage done to the other was not so extensive: for, though the greater part of the cornea was rendered opaque, there was a minute pellucid speck to the right of the pupil, which permitted a ray of light to fall upon the verge of the retina, and thus he was enabled to distinguish between day and night: but he had no perception of the form or colour of objects around him; so that, for all useful purposes, vision was completely lost." But his marvellous sense of touch, as described by Wordsworth, was in no degree exaggerated. In his eighth summer, he began the study of botany; and pursued it systematically in his thirteenth year. "His method of examining plants must be briefly told. Systems of classification were but little valued, except so far as they aided him in recognising individual form. The plant to be examined was held by the root or base in one hand, while the fingers of the other travelled slowly upwards, over the stem, branches, and leaves, till they reached the flower. If the species had been already met with, this procedure was sufficient for its recognition; if it proved to be a novelty, its class was first determined by the insertion of the tip of his tongue within the flower: thus he discovered the number and arrangement of the stamens and pistils. When the flower was small he requested his reader to ascertain these points with a lens. The class and order being determined, the genus was next worked out, word by word of the description, so far at least as the state of the specimen would allow. But his perceptive power over form was most conspicuous in the analysis of species. It was truly wonderful to witness the rapidity with which his fingers ran among the

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leaves, taking cognizance of their divisions, shape, serratures, and of the presence or absence of hairs. The finest down was detected, by a stem or leaf being drawn gently across the border of his lower lip; so fine, indeed, that a young eye often required a lens to verify the truth of the perception. Another peculiarity is worthy of notice. Repeated perusal of descriptions had enabled him to prefigure in his mind's eye, the form without the presence of specimens; so that, when a species for the first time came within his touch, he at once named it from memory. . . . It was, probably, on one of these occasions, that Mr. Wordsworth, while describing the little cushion-like plant, with white roots and purple flowers, growing near Grisedale Tarn, caught the first glimpse of that conception which was afterwards expanded into the beautiful picture given of Mr. Gough in *The Excursion.*"

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, in his Essay on *The Soul and its Organs of Sense*, refers to him as "not only an excellent mathematician, but an infallible botanist and zoologist. He has frequently, at first feel, corrected the mistakes of the most experienced sportsmen, with regard to the birds or vermin which they had killed, when it chanced to be a variety or rare species, so completely resembling the common one, that it required great steadiness of observation to detect the difference, even after it had been pointed out." "Good heavens!" added Coleridge, "why his face sees all over!"

Gough died in the 69th year of his age; and he was buried, not (as Wordsworth puts it in *The Excursion*) at Grasmere, but in the churchyard of Kendal. What is more remarkable is that he lived for ten years after *The Excursion* was printed; and Wordsworth must have written the passage in the Seventh Book referring to Gough in anticipation of his death, probably 13 years before he died.

Mr. John Watson of Kendal tells me that he has had put into his hands a MS. autobiography of Gough. Mr. Watson has himself written an interesting sketch of the blind botanist.

See the passage in *The Excursion*, book vii. l. 492, etc., referring to Gough.—Ed.

END OF VOL. V

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